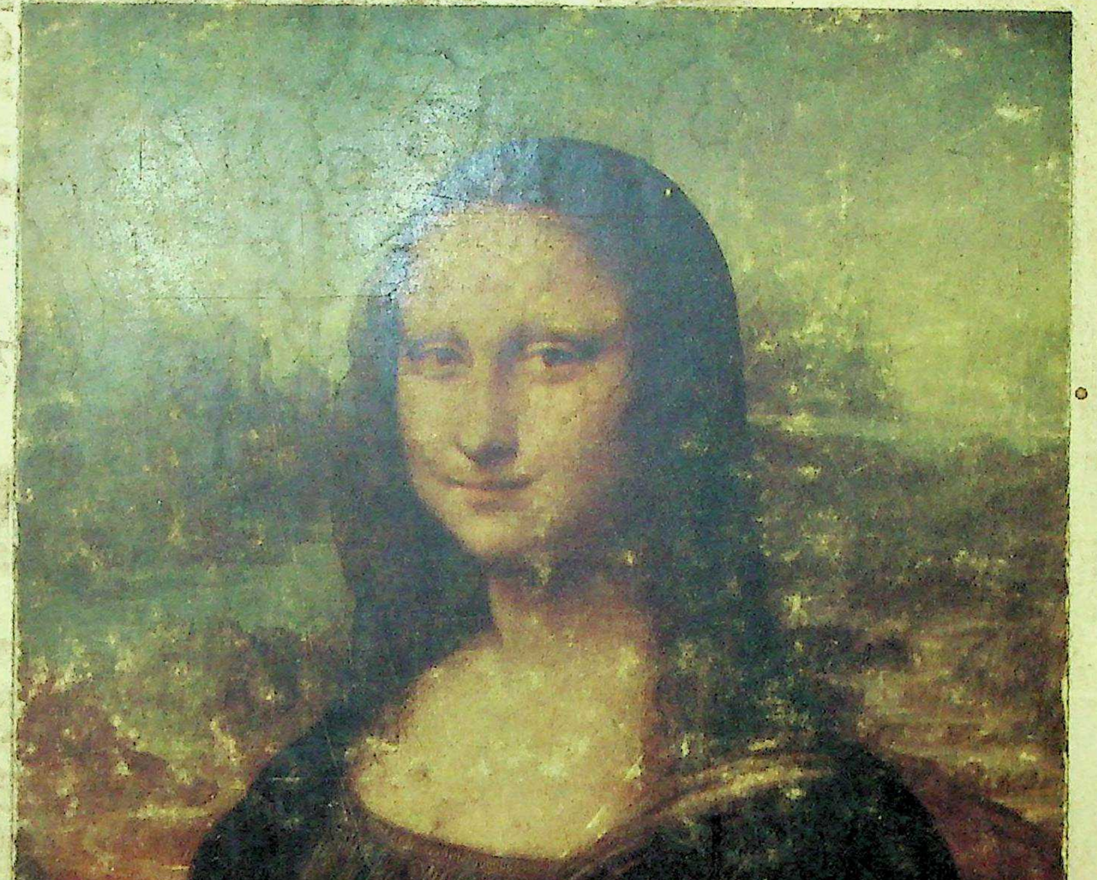
THE Louvre PARIS



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Text by

MILTON S. FOX

Editor, Library of Great Painters

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GREAT PAINTINGS OF THE WORLD

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THE Louvre PARIS

Text by **MILTON S. FOX** *Editor, Library of Great Painters*

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On the cover
MONA LISA
by Leonardo da Vinci
(see commentary on page 60)

MILTON S. FOX, *Editor*

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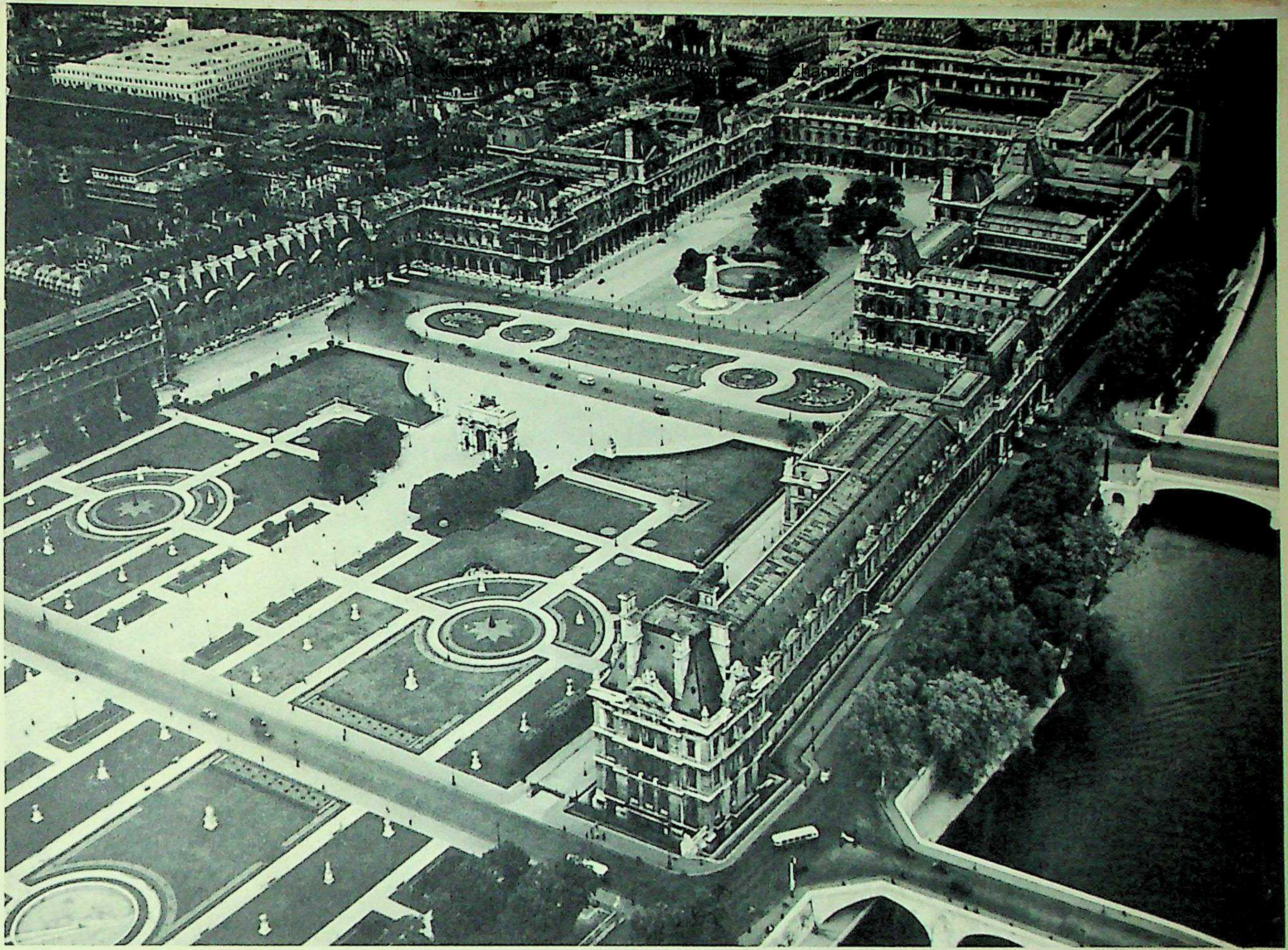


THE LOUVRE

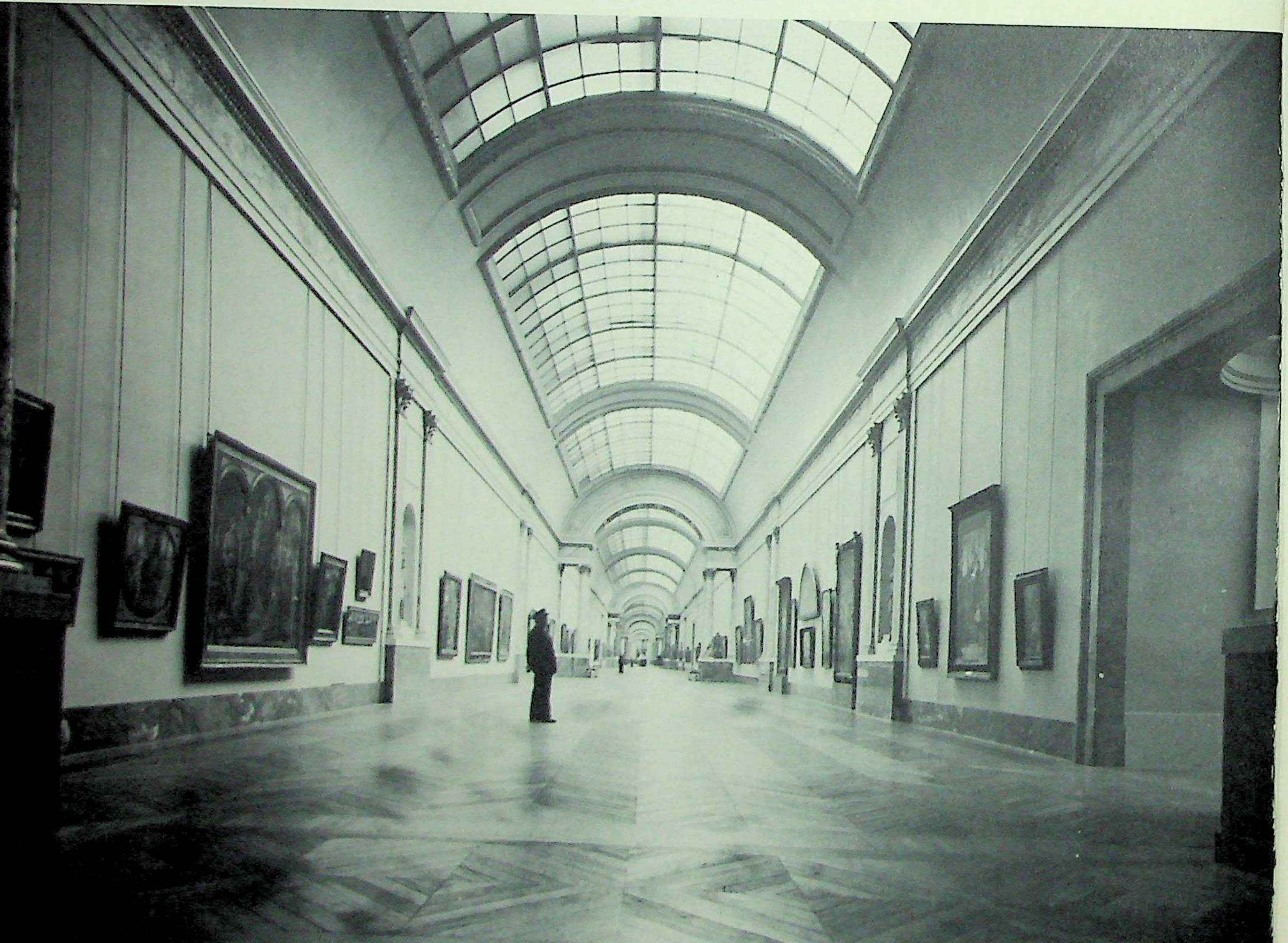
THE LOUVRE IS MORE THAN A GREAT MUSEUM. IT IS AN epitome of a nation's history and culture. For over seven hundred and fifty years it has stood for all that changes and all that remains the same in French life. Each age has helped to shape its character; every important ruler has left his mark upon it. Though it has suffered periods of neglect, desecration, and mean use, the Louvre has had the love of a great people, to whom the pursuit of art is a natural activity of life.

It is not enough to say that the Louvre is the richest of museums, a vast treasury of arts and civilizations, magnificently housed. It has a deeper meaning. The Louvre is a living idea. In the succession of monarchs who built, tore down and rebuilt, in the tremendous expenditures of money, in the acquisitions and the gifts of private citizens, we see the forces which shaped its growth. French architects, painters, and sculptors contributed their best efforts, while the rulers of France were gathering their fabulous treasures and extending generous patronage to workers in the arts. The living idea may be seen as an artistic environment where intelligence, talent, and grace are joined; where amidst rich associations, the public may come for enjoyment and artists for nourishment and inspiration.

The earliest known structure on the present site was a fortress, begun about 1190 by Philip Augustus, one of the great Parisian kings. It is likely, however, that during Clovis' siege of Paris at the end of the fifth century, a Frankish tower or fortified camp existed here. If that is so, the name "Louvre" may derive from the Saxon word *lower:* a fortified chateau; but it may also have come from *louveterie* (Low Latin, *lupara*): the headquarters of the wolf-hunt; or, as some believe, from the name of a leper colony.

The Louvre of Philip Augustus, of which traces may still be seen, was huddled in the southwest quarter of the present Court of the Old Louvre, and consisted of a large circular tower guarded by turreted walls and

THE GRANDE GALERIE



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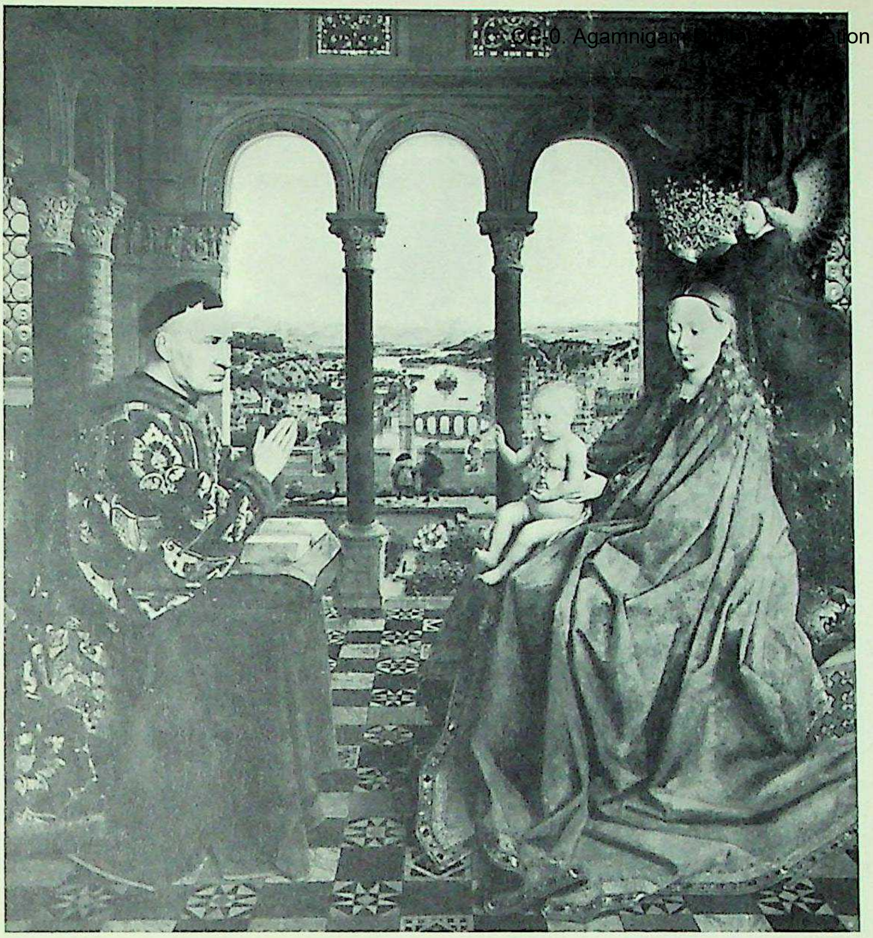


J A N   V A N   E Y C K   *Flemish, 1390/1400-1441*

THE VIRGIN AND CHANCELLOR ROLIN

Tempera and oil on wood. 26 x 24⅜″

Painter to the Count of Hainault and the Duke of Burgundy, Van Eyck laid the foundations of modern painting with his subtle use of the medium of oils. This painting shows how Van Eyck carried realism to the point of extreme fidelity, and also achieved a deep psychological significance, as in the severe face of the donor in this panel, Nicolas Rolin, Chancellor of Burgundy.

surrounded by deep moats. The battlements to the west, and along the Seine on the south, were backed by buildings; to the north and east stood two thick crenellated facades. Situated outside the walls of the town, the Louvre served the double function of protecting Paris against marauders from the west, and the king from his own Parisian subjects on the east.

With Philip, Paris became at the beginning of the thirteenth century the residence of the crown, but the Louvre itself was used mainly as a fortress and arsenal. It was the symbol of the strength of the king, a "tower of Paris" comparable to the Tower of London. In its dungeons languished the nobles who defied the ascendancy of the crown. Its rooms held the royal treasures—jewels, religious objects of art, illuminated manuscripts, armor. Though it was tiny by comparison with the present Louvre, which, with the Garden of Tuileries covers forty-five acres—Philip's courtyard measured roughly 160 by 200 feet—it quickly captured popular imagination and was celebrated by storytellers and balladists. Its legendary career had begun.

Even then, Philip's Louvre was the continuation of a tradition. Since earliest times, France had produced an unbroken line of artists. As a people, the French have been among the first collectors. Their royal houses had preceded even the secular powers of Italy in acquiring works of art and patronizing artists. Long before Philip, Charlemagne decreed that churches should be decorated with pictures, and had engaged artists to paint miniatures for his books. From the twelfth century to the Renaissance, France perfected one of the most astonishing of all arts—that of stained glass.

The kings who succeeded Philip made only minor structural changes in the Louvre. But from Flanders and Italy, the court and nobility drew artists and craftsmen to enrich French cultural life. Art and learning flourished. (The Etude—then the name of the University of Paris—had received a franchise, the first of its kind in the world, from Philip in 1200, and became a model to other nations. In 1461, ambassadors from Florence reported 18,000 "scholars" in Paris, not counting those studying civil law.) The Louvre now served as a royal retreat and became the scene of sumptuous banquets, state occasions, and tournaments which lasted for days. Elaborate gardens were designed—another art in which the French have excelled; an aviary with falcons and exotic birds, and menagerie of wild animals added to the medieval splendor. Louis IX, the sainted king of France, administered justice in an enlarged room where the present Gallery of the Caryatids is located; he founded the library which, under Charles V, a hundred years later, was to become the nucleus of the present Bibliothèque Nationale.

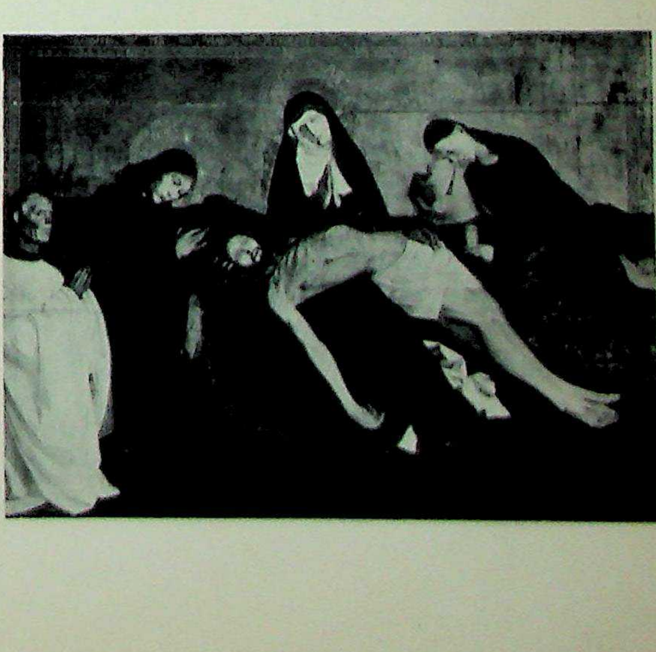
U N K N O W N   P A I N T E R

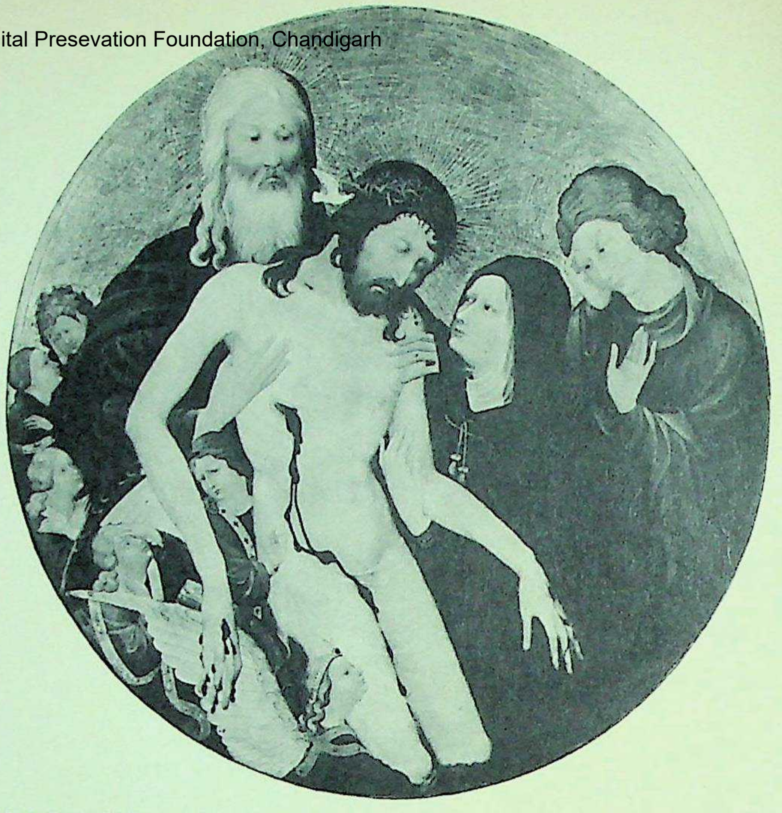
School of Avignon, Fifteenth Century

VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON PIETA

Tempera on wood. 63¾ x 85⅞″

We do not know the artist who created, in a sober, monumental style, this harrowing image of sorrow. It is a superb example of Provençal painting, whose linear style gives a harsh reality to form and a poignant expression to faces.





MALOUEL *French, End of Fourteenth Century*
PIETA
Tempera on wood. Diameter 25¼"

Painted about 1400, in egg tempera on a gold ground, for the Dukes of Burgundy. The dead Christ, supported by God the Father and the Virgin, is mourned by St. John and angels; the Holy Ghost is symbolized by the dove.

The Louvre of the Middle Ages was doomed as a fortress, when, in the 1350s, a powerful group of rebellious merchants under Etienne Marcel took possession and reduced its military importance by extending the city walls beyond it. Once the master of Paris, the Louvre now became its captive. Though it was to continue to function as arsenal and prison through succeeding reigns, it now, under Charles V, became a part-time habitation of the royal family, filled with courtiers, artisans, and hangers-on. This king, *"sage artiste et architecteur,"* as he was called by a contemporary lady of letters, provided the Louvre's final burst of medieval glory. An army of architects, masons, artists, and decorators was put to work. The hundred-and-fifty-year-old buildings were "modernized" and enlarged; two new wings were erected in place of the walls on the north and east. The quadrangle was at last completed, and according to accounts of the time, it was a marvel to behold: a forest of towers and turrets —round, square, conical, brilliant with glazed tiles— with picturesque outbuildings, gardens, trellises, and a menagerie.

Despite its increased size and elegance, Charles was obliged to sleep in the garret, when, in 1377, he entertained the Holy Roman Emperor, the King of Bohemia, and their suites of more than a hundred princes. It became painfully clear that the old Louvre could not serve as a royal residence for the growing nation. Succeeding kings lived and held court elsewhere.

During the reign of Charles' son, the sixth of that name, a madman, the English conquered the French at Agincourt in 1415, and occupied Paris. They plundered the Louvre. Marauders roamed through the halls hunting for what was left. A large part of the ancient treasures, greatly enriched by Charles V, disappeared— objects such as today the great museums of the world passionately desire. Indeed, a few of these original treasures are now the pride of European museums, including the Louvre itself, and part of Charles' library, as already noted, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

For almost a century and a half, the Louvre was neglected. Prison and arsenal again, its outbuildings falling into ruin, its walls moldering, it became a gloomy mockery of its early splendor. With Francis I, crowned in 1515, the medieval stronghold was marked for obliteration. The Louvre we know today was born.

By 1527, the old tower, which had stood for more than three hundred years, was regarded as a grim nuisance, shutting out light and air. It was torn down in four months. The royal court was steadily consolidating its authority; it no longer had need of such antiquated reminders of the personal might of the ruler. The palace replaced the castle. Instead of a fortress, the royal residence must be made to symbolize the wealth and culture of a vigorous nation: resplendent and noble, an object of art and display, adaptable to luxurious living and vast administration.

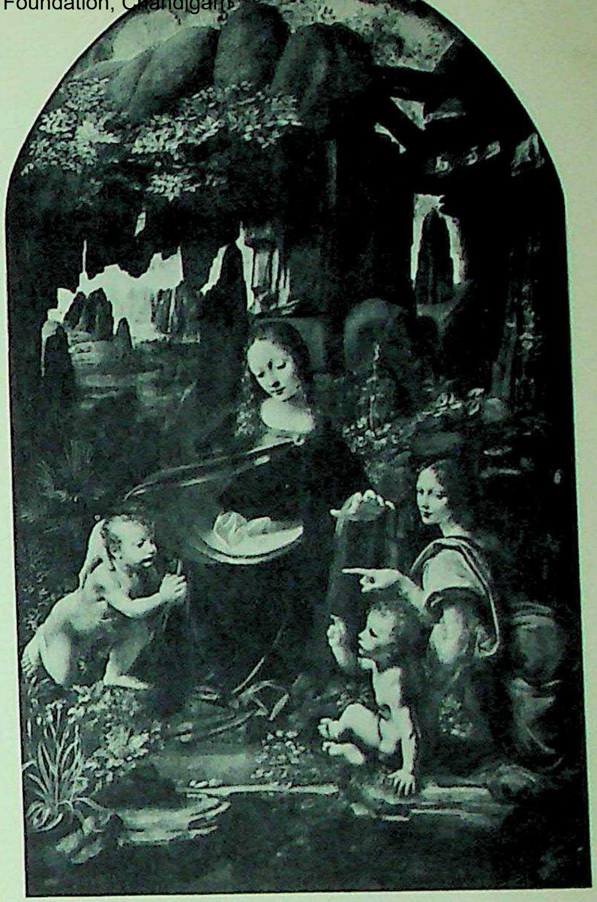
But Francis, whose portrait is here reproduced (colorplate 16), was a cosmopolitan, "the first gentleman of France." Though occupied with interminable wars which drained the treasury, he managed to indulge his love of splendor. During his campaigning in Italy, he was enchanted by her art; he forthwith invited Italian artists to work for his court. Many came: Leonardo da Vinci, who lived the rest of his days in France and died, it is said, in the King's arms; Andrea del Sarto, Primaticcio, Il Rosso, Niccolo dell' Abbate, and others. Four of the Louvre's Leonardos and seven of its Raphaels are a legacy of this great monarch. Francis was patron of the school of Fontainebleau, encouraging the painting of easel pictures; he began a collection which formed the nucleus of a national gallery. As yet, however, the collection was the private property of the king, never open to the public.

During Francis' reign, Renaissance overwhelmed Gothic in France. Paris, the great representative center of the country, drew into herself all currents and became decisive for literature, art, architecture, fashion, and manners. For generations, the arts were to take their impulse from the court and royal palace; Francis cleared the way for his country to assume the cultural leadership of the world.

After having lavished huge sums on a futile rehabilitation of the old Louvre, in 1546 Francis put Pierre Lescot, architect, and Jean Goujon, sculptor, to work building a palace in "the new style." Eight months later the King died. Under his son, Henry II, Lescot and Goujon completed the new southwest angle, where three hundred and fifty years earlier Philip Augustus had erected the first Louvre. They built and decorated

LEONARDO DA VINCI
Florentine, 1452-1519
VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS
Oil on canvas. 78⅜ x 48″

The Louvre is the richest of all the world's galleries in paintings by Leonardo. In its collections are not only the Mona Lisa *and his youthful* Annunciation, *but other works including the* Virgin of the Rocks. *This painting, so crucial in the development of Leonardo's* sfumato *style, was brought to France by 1642, when it was hanging at Fontainebleau. Another version, by Leonardo and his pupils, is in the National Gallery, London.*

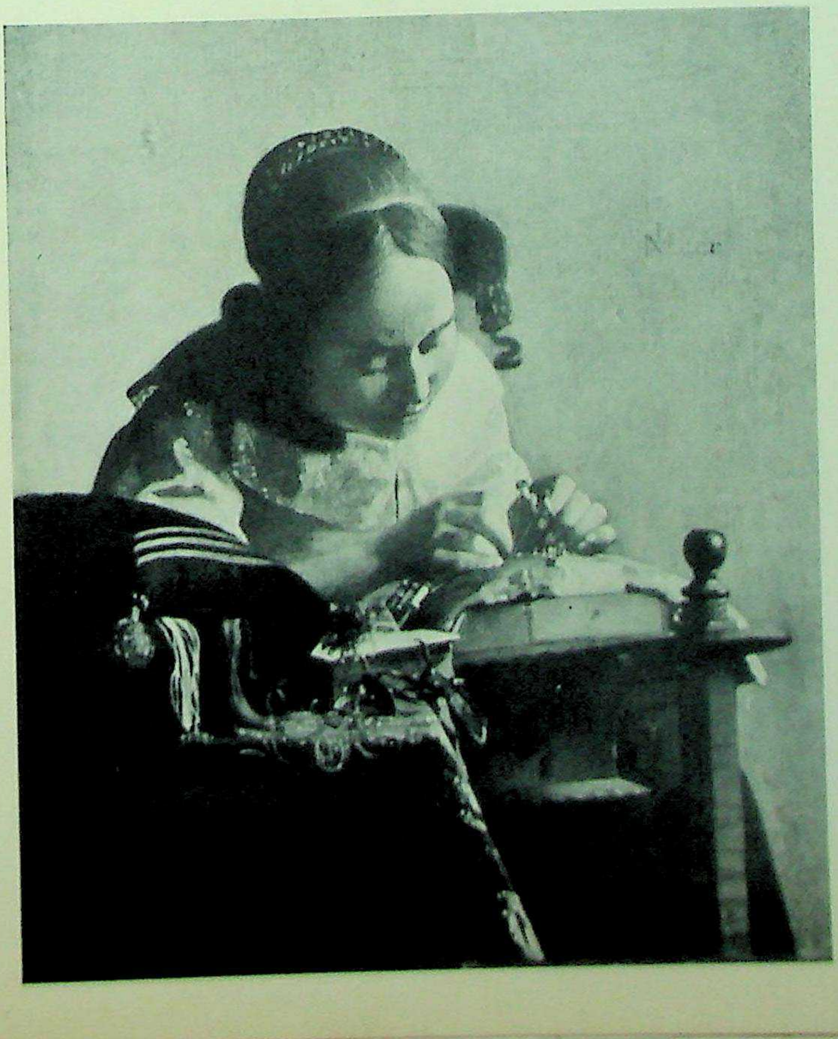


so gracefully, with such harmony and balance and charm, that their work very exactly conveys what is meant by the expression "French taste." Their Louvre was a jewel-case, worthy of the treasures it was to hold.

Indeed, according to some accounts, Henry's imagination was so inflamed by the work that he commanded Lescot to plan a Louvre of unprecedented magnificence and monumental size. They talked of quadrupling the size of the original courtyard, and of building a palace at the far west end of the Tuileries, where a tile factory once stood; the Palace of the Louvre and the Palace of the Tuileries were to be joined by enormous wings, which would enclose vast gardens. It was nearly three hundred and fifty years before the whole of such a "grand plan" became actuality; every sovereign after Francis and every administration after the Revolution was to make a fresh attempt at completion. The Louvre thus became not only the palace of the kings, the seat of government, and the repository of the royal treasures; it became also a work-in-progress, at once training ground and masterpiece, of the greatest French talent.

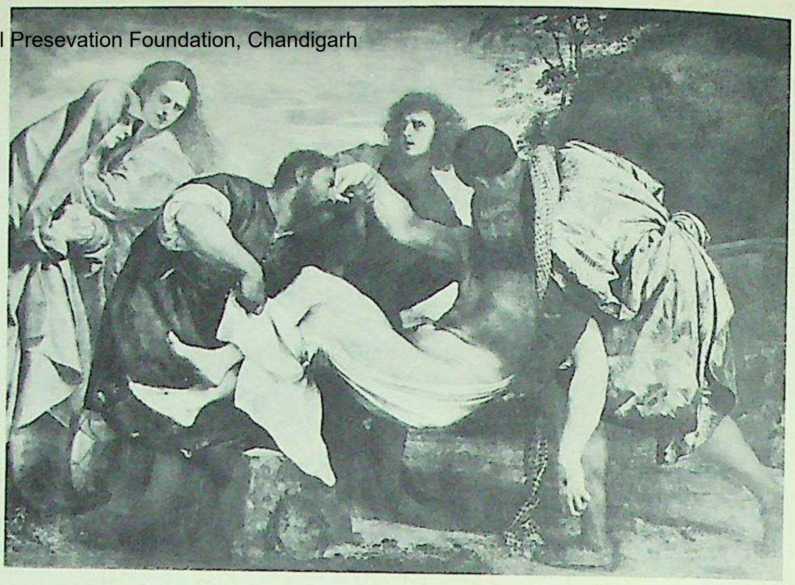
VERMEER *Dutch, 1632-1675*
THE LACEMAKER
Oil on canvas. 9½ x 8¼″

Probably painted at the height of Vermeer's brief career, the Lacemaker *shows how the artist transforms the reality of everyday life and humble themes. The quintessence of his subject—its charm and sweetness and poetry—are conveyed through his serene, limpid technique, and the wonderful clarity of his tones..*



Yet the Louvre was still a weird melange in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: new buildings in the Renaissance style, finished and unfinished; ancient buildings standing amidst new construction; old towers, gates, and battlements; still stronghold as well as palace. "Zeste!" exclaimed one astonished ambassador to the court. "Such a main gate would be better suited for a prison than for so great a Prince!" And an English visitor remarked, in 1598, that the Louvre had exactly the air of a jail.

Work had come to an abrupt halt about 1578. The treasury was emptied. Following the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, when the halls of the Louvre were splattered with the blood of Huguenots, civil strife exhausted France. The court lived in fear: all the entrances to the palace were walled up except one heavily guarded gate. The Louvre was the scene of intrigue, violence, executions—and lavish entertainment, even including such hysterical entertainment as fights between wild animals. But the "grand plan" was only momentarily delayed by the difficult times: the museum-idea was not to be thwarted. Lescot soon was to complete part of the new south wing on the Seine; and for Catherine de Médicis, the queen mother, was erected the Petite Galerie (the present Gallery of Apollo), which burned in 1661, and part of the Palace of the Tuileries (destroyed in 1871), where she could keep an eye on her sons, "unseen but present."



TITIAN *Venetian, 1477?-1576*
THE ENTOMBMENT
Oil on canvas. 58¼ x 84⅝"

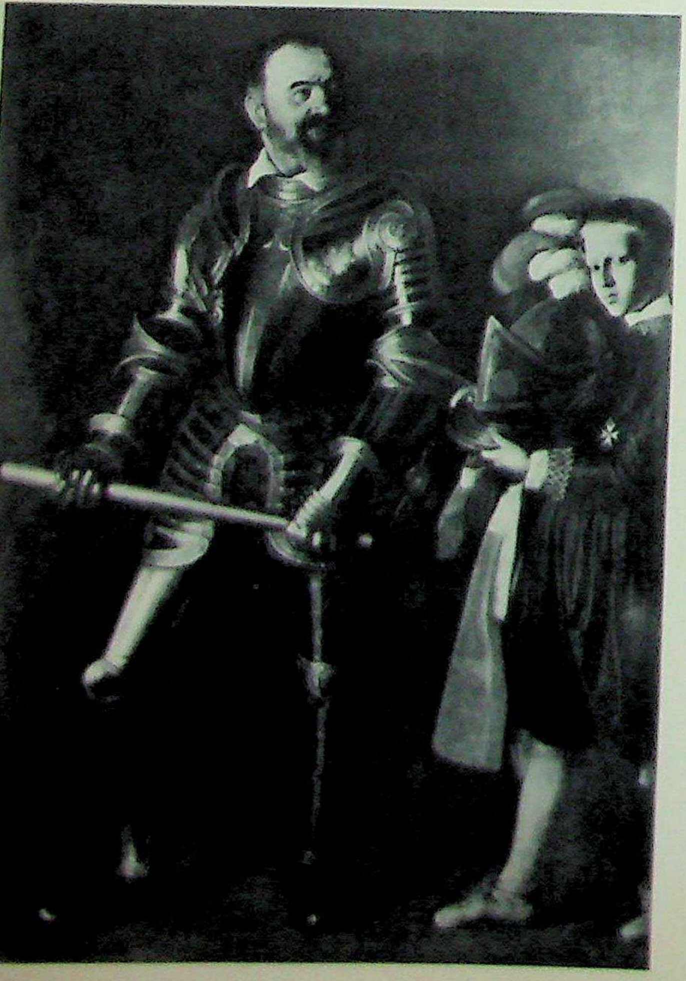
The Entombment *was painted for Federigo Gonzaga of Mantua, one of the many illustrious patrons from whom Titian received commissions during his long and tremendously productive career. It is believed that in the figure of Joseph of Arimathea, who supports the feet of the dead Christ, we have a self-portrait.*

These last two structures were outside the original quadrangle; the Louvre at last broke free of its medieval confines. The pace now quickened, as though the Louvre were anxious to hurry its destiny. Henry IV completed the work begun by Catherine; and in one tremendous leap, his architects, Jacques II Androuet Ducerceau and Louis Métezeau, spanned the distance from the Petite Galerie to the Palace of the Tuileries. This Grande Galerie, paralleling the Seine, and familiar to millions of visitors to the collections, is more than a quarter of a mile long. With this structure, the architecture of the Louvre, first Gothic, then Renaissance, now turned toward classicism.

The "grand plan" was becoming actuality; and under Henry IV the Louvre began its career as the artistic capital of the world. Despite wars, intrigue, religious strife, and financial troubles—and until he was cut down by the assassin, Ravaillac—this monarch built and planned greatly. The arts seldom had, in all history, such loving patronage. Hundreds of artists and craftsmen lived as his guests on the lower floors of the Grande Galerie—a precedent which was continued by all succeeding reigns until Napoleon I revoked these privileges. The original tapestry workshops of the Gobelins were housed here, and for Henry's queen, Marie de Médicis, Rubens painted a vast series of pictures—now in the Louvre.

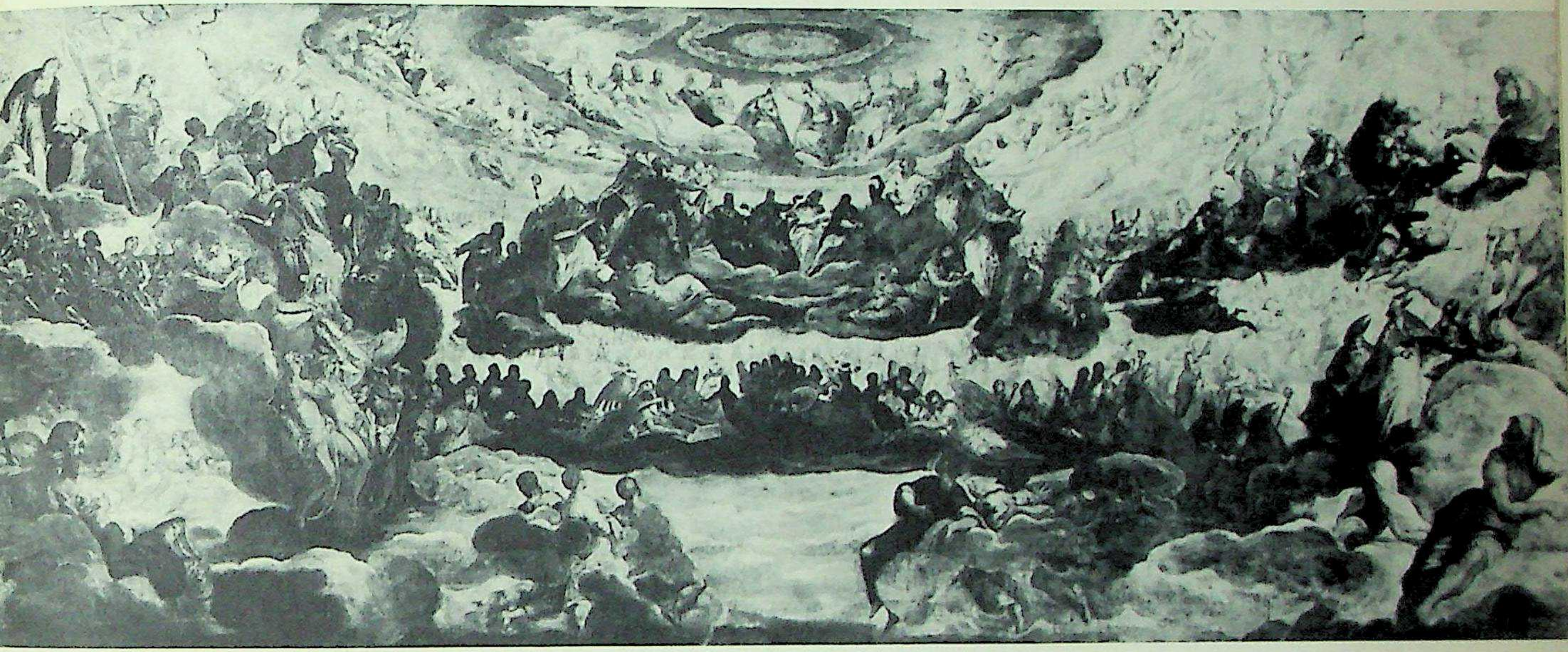
Succeeding Henry, Louis XIII turned his attention to the old court of the Louvre. The ancient north and east sides, still standing in the midst of Renaissance grandeur, were torn down; almost all vestiges of Gothic vanished. The present Court of the Louvre was planned, four times the size of its predecessor. Louis' architect, Lemercier, built the enlarged northwest corner, while elsewhere an enormous amount of decorating went forward. Poussin was called from Rome to do a series of paintings and stuccoes, but he soon fled from the intrigues of the palace.

The Louvre now entered a period of intense activity in all directions. Colbert, minister of Louis XIV, spared no expense to glorify the reign of the Sun King. The promotion of art became an affair of government. The royal collection, reduced from Francis' large number to about one hundred paintings, was built up to 2,403, according to a catalogue of 1709. Works of art poured in, from the collection of Charles I, beheaded King of England; from Italy; from the private collections of nobles. The Academy of Painting was founded in 1648. The first official exhibitions of French art were held, in 1667, 1669, 1671; from 1673 on, these exhibitions were held in the Louvre. A school for drawing from the nude was established—to become later the Ecole des Beaux Arts. And in 1681, many of Louis' paintings were put on semi-public view in the Louvre itself.



CARAVAGGIO *Neapolitan, 1562?-1609*
PORTRAIT OF ALOF DE WIGNACOURT
Oil on canvas. 76¾ x 52¾"

This state portrait of the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta is in Caravaggio's final manner. Background incidents and objects have been abolished, and the palette is restricted though rich. The forceful and domineering character of the subject is enhanced by the powerful volumes and sculptural synthesis produced through the handling of the light.



TINTORETTO *Venetian, 1518-1594*
PARADISE
Oil on canvas. 56¼ x 142½"

A sketch for the largest oil painting in the world, the Paradise *in the Ducal Palace in Venice. Tintoretto recalls the Copernican system of astronomy: as the planets revolve around the sun, so saints, prophets, and blessed are set concentrically around Christ as He places the crown on the Virgin's head.*

During this period extensive work on the Louvre was resumed. Le Brun, Le Sueur, and others were called in to decorate the rooms, while important changes were made in the exterior arrangements of the buildings. New wings were built for the Palace of the Tuileries, where Louis lived and had his throne; the Petite Galerie was greatly enlarged; north, east, and south buildings were added to the quadrangle of the old Louvre. The palace called Le Petit Bourbon was demolished in order to make room for Le Vau's replica of the wing built by Pierre Lescot. The Gallery of the Kings, destroyed by fire in 1661, was quickly replaced by Le Brun's masterful Gallery of Apollo.

The Louvre was at last approaching completion. It still lacked an outside facade on the east. To build this, the great Bernini, who had designed much of the Rome of the Baroque age, was invited, but he suffered the same treatment as Poussin. He was received with great pomp, a pretense was made of laying the cornerstone; then he was sent back to Rome. The commission was finally given to Le Vau, Le Brun, and Claude Perrault; and their colonnade, at once simple and majestic, was completed in 1670. The work of decorating the facade stopped in 1678, not to be resumed until the Empire: the Sun King had moved to his beloved Versailles.

The Louvre was taken over by a curiously assorted population and fell into a state of disrepair which aroused the indignation of many Parisians. Its courtyard was littered with rubbish and hovels, its entrances were turned into shops and stalls, and its unfinished buildings were inhabited by the poor. The Louvre began to resemble the ruins of ancient Rome. Courtiers moved into the apartments, which they transformed to their own taste and at the King's expense. They ripped out the paneling, defaced the ceilings, and opened skylights in the attic roof. The Academies of Painting and Architecture now occupied the quarters in the Grande Galerie which Henry IV had assigned to the artisans; after 1725 the Academy of Painting held its exhibitions in the Salon Carré of the Louvre: thus the name "Salon" for these exhibitions.

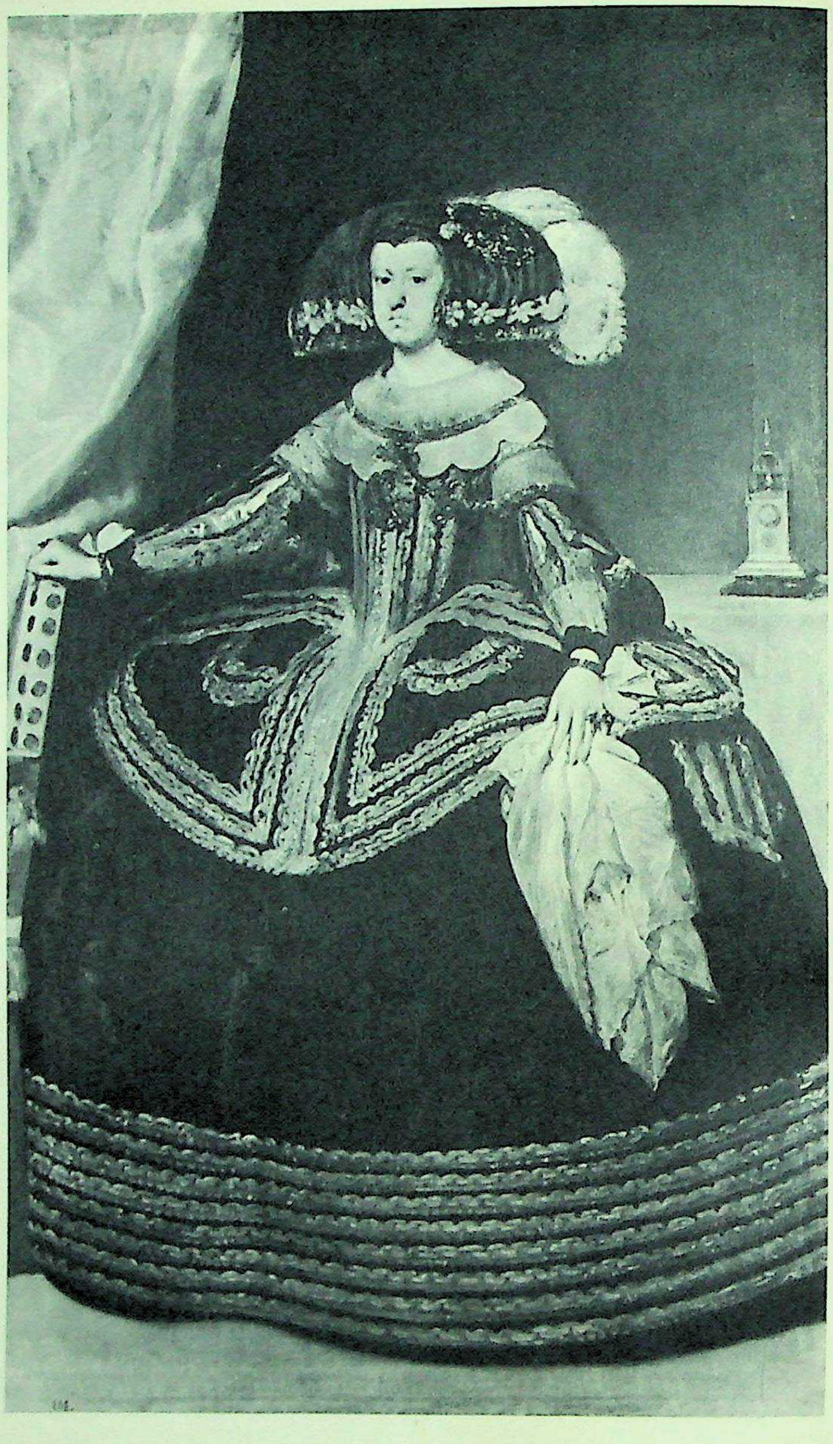
Paris attempted to save the Palace by making it a city hall, but the proposal was rejected by the King. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the idea forcibly presented itself of using the Louvre as a public museum. The success of a public exhibition of paintings at the Luxembourg Palace in 1750 was encouraging, and in 1756 plans were made to show the King's pictures in the Grande Galerie of the Louvre.

It was not until after the Revolution, however, that the idea came to fruition, and on November 18, 1793, the museum was inaugurated. Its guiding concept was frankly educational, reflecting the democratic ideals of the Revolution. Works of art were no longer to be assembled for the delectation of the privileged classes; they were to be available to all. The painter David was president of the commission appointed to administer the Louvre and its annual purchase fund of 100,000 francs.

The royal collections were supplemented by numerous paintings and *objets d'art,* previously confiscated from the Church and the *émigrés,* and stored in the former convent of the Petits-Augustins. For the next twenty years the collections of the Louvre reflected the fortunes of Napoleon's army. In 1794, the pictures looted from Belgium arrived, and these were followed by works ceded by Italy; in December, 1797, a banquet was held in the Grande Galerie in honor of Napoleon and his victorious forces.

In July, 1798, "the triumphal entry of the memorials of the sciences and the arts" took place; masterpieces such as the *Laocoön* were driven in chariots from the Petits-Augustins, to be installed in the Louvre. With the proclamation of Empire in 1804, the museum—now known as the "Musée Napoléon"—rapidly expanded; antiquities from Naples, the Borghese collection, the *Venus de Medici,* and paintings from Germany and Spain were acquired by its director, Baron Denon, who was exceedingly sharp in ferreting out works of art.

After Waterloo, the victors took from the Louvre the greater part of the collections acquired by conquest or treaty—and much besides, for good measure. But the French had collected vastly: soon the walls were covered with the Rubens paintings transferred from the Luxembourg Palace, with additional paintings formerly assigned by the Convention to provincial museums; the final transfer of works from the Petits-Augustins and churches occurred now. Throughout the nineteenth century and since, the Louvre has been enormously enriched by gifts from generous collectors, after many of whom various galleries are named. In addition to its paintings and drawings, the Louvre of today is renowned for its collection of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Oriental antiquities. Archaeological finds came from excavators in Myrrhina, Chaldea, Persia. By its purchases, the Society of Friends of the Louvre continues the work of filling the gaps that still remain in the Louvre's vast panorama of civilizations.



VELAZQUEZ *Spanish, 1599-1660*
PORTRAIT OF QUEEN MARIANA
Oil on canvas. 83⅛ x 49⅝"

Mariana of Austria was the second wife of King Philip IV of Spain. In this portrait, which has been called his finest painting of a woman, Velazquez has not flattered her plain features; he has skillfully transformed her by emphasizing her architectural headdress, her magnificent costume, and her beautiful and regal hand.

During the nineteenth century, work on the building of the Louvre was resumed. As new collections were acquired, new rooms had to be opened; and a program of renovation of both interiors and exteriors was begun by Napoleon. The excrescences of the eighteenth century—the hovels and stalls in the courtyard and entrances—were removed, and the artists who had taken up residence in the Palace were evicted, David and Fragonard amongst them. Napoleon's architects, Percier and Fontaine, made changes in facades and redecorated the Grande Galerie; they began another wing on the north, along the rue de Rivoli, to complete the enclosure of the entire area between the Louvre and the Palace of the Tuileries. The triumphal Arc du Carrousel, which stands in the Gardens of the Tuileries and is modeled on the Roman Arch of Domitian, is also by Percier and Fontaine, during the First Empire.

Construction continued during the Restoration, but it was Napoleon III who gave the Louvre its final form. His architects, Visconti and Lefuel, were commissioned to erect two new blocks of buildings which join the wings running from the Louvre to the Tuileries. Logical as this plan was, the new buildings, replacing many of the older facades, suffer from the excessive ornamentation of the Second Empire.

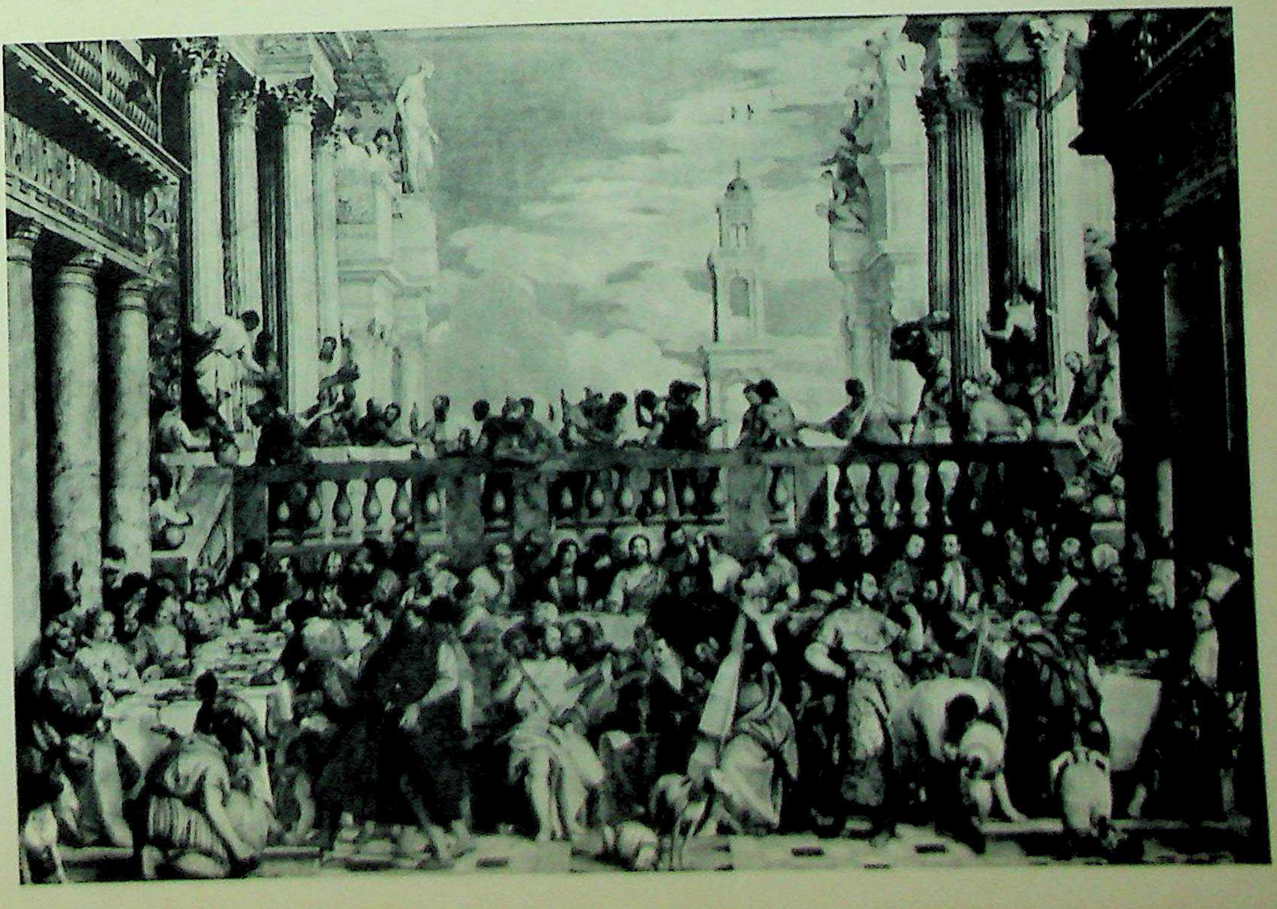
Although the Louvre survived without damage the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, it was not to be so fortunate during the struggles of the Commune. In 1871, fanatical Communards set fire to the Tuileries and the Library of the Louvre. A battalion of infantry checked the fire before it could reach the Grande Galerie, and the collections were saved.

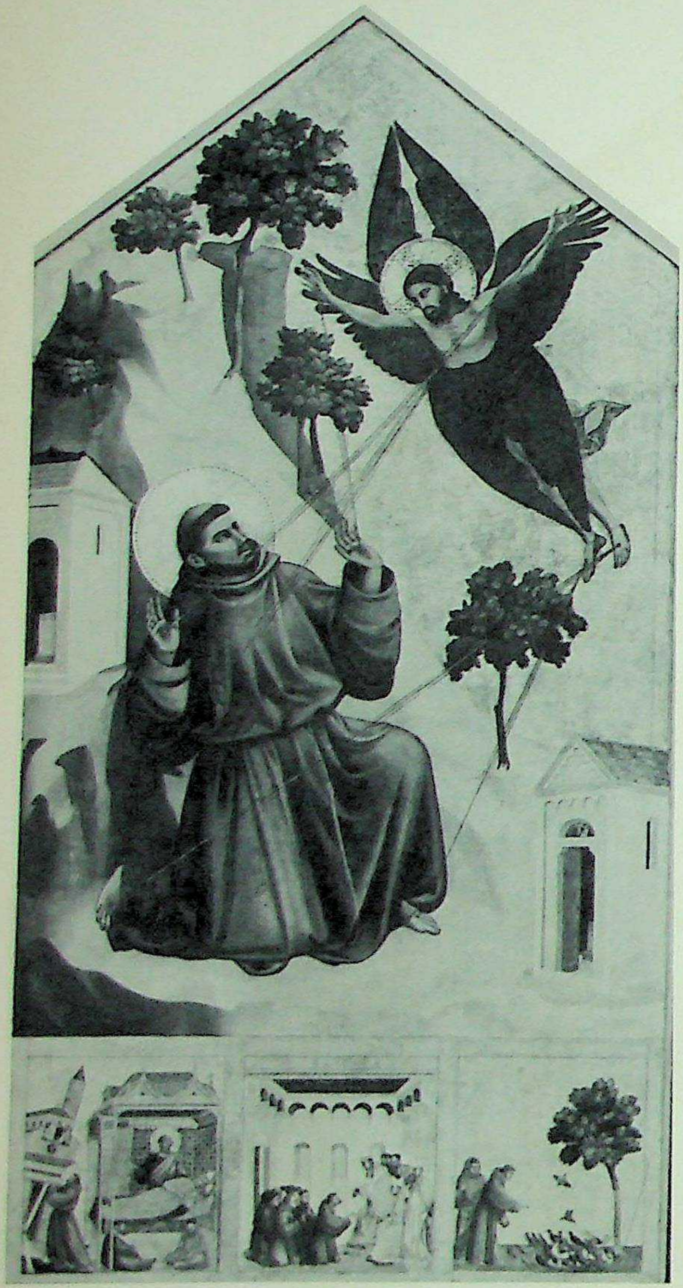
The Third Republic took on the work of restoring the damaged buildings, but after much debate and vacillation, it ordered the complete demolition of the gutted Palace of the Tuileries. It is ironical that at the very time when the goal of enclosing the entire area with palatial buildings had finally been achieved—at such tremendous expenditures of effort and money—a major element of the scheme should be destroyed. Violent controversy still continues between those who believe that the "grand plan" lost its *raison d'être,* and those who believe that the Louvre has gained a most magnificent vista, across the Gardens of the Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde, the Champs Elysées, to the Arc de Triomphe.

The Louvre is a glorious monument to French culture and sensibility; but because of the universality of its idea and its treasures, it is a shrine for all mankind.

VERONESE *Venetian, 1528-1588*
THE WEDDING AT CANA
Oil on canvas. 114 x 176"

This immense painting, one of Veronese's most beautiful and most characteristic, came to the Louvre in 1799 by conquest. Though its subject is religious, many of the figures represent contemporaries: the quartet of musicians in the foreground are Titian (double bass), Jacopo Bassano (flute), Tintoretto (viola), and the artist himself playing the cello.





GIOTTO *Florentine, c. 1266-1336*

SAINT FRANCIS RECEIVING THE STIGMATA
Tempera on wood, 123⅝ x 63¾"

Panel paintings by Giotto are rare, making this picture all the more precious. The central panel depicts St. Francis among the rocks of Verna receiving the stigmata during a vision of Christ wearing the six wings of a seraph. The predella below the central panel depicts other scenes from the life of this saint whose teachings stimulated in Giotto and his contemporaries the love of nature and the observation of reality.

colorplate 1 ⟶

CIMABUE

Florentine, 1240?-1302?

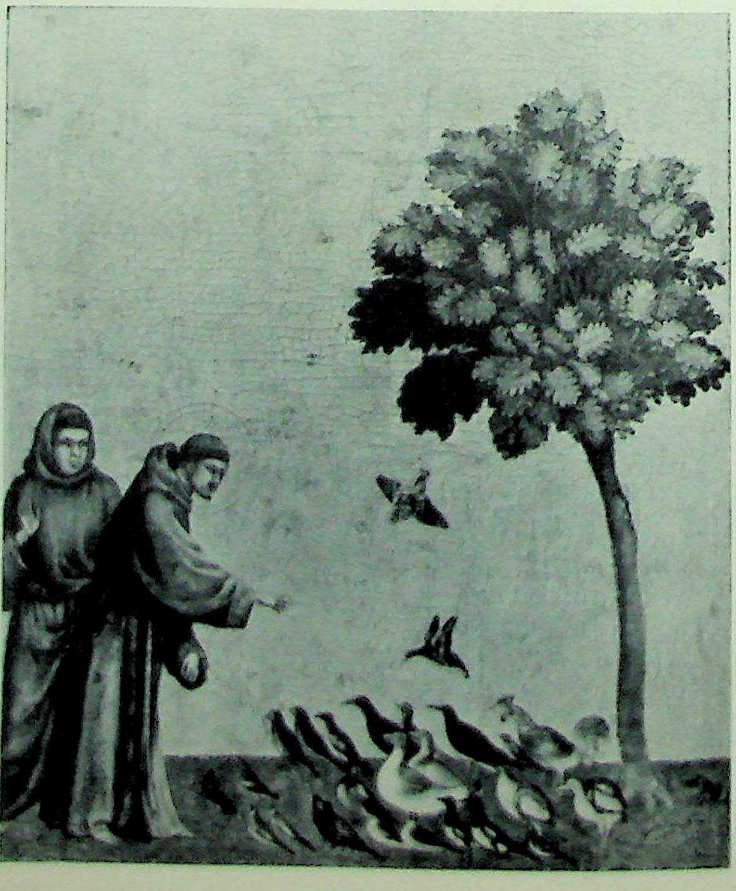
THE MADONNA OF THE ANGELS

Tempera on wood, 167 x 109"

The *Madonna of the Angels* comes from a church in Pisa and was brought to the Louvre in 1799 by Napoleon. It is now regarded as a rather late work by Cimabue, one of the first artists to emerge from the collective anonymity of the Middle Ages. The details—the scroll which conveys the Infant's blessing, the drapery, attitudes, and angels' wings—still follow Byzantine iconographical traditions. But the new spirit of the fourteenth century is heralded in the flowing lines of the drawing, the modeling, and in the beauty of the symmetrical composition, imposing in the simplicity of its steplike movement which rises from the bottom of the throne and culminates in the Madonna's head.

In his own time Cimabue was hailed as a great innovator, the first to paint faces and figures in a lifelike manner. According to Vasari, one of Cimabue's paintings of the Madonna was a work of so much admiration to the people of Florence that "it was carried in solemn procession, with the sound of trumpets," from the painter's home to the church of Santa Maria Novella.

detail



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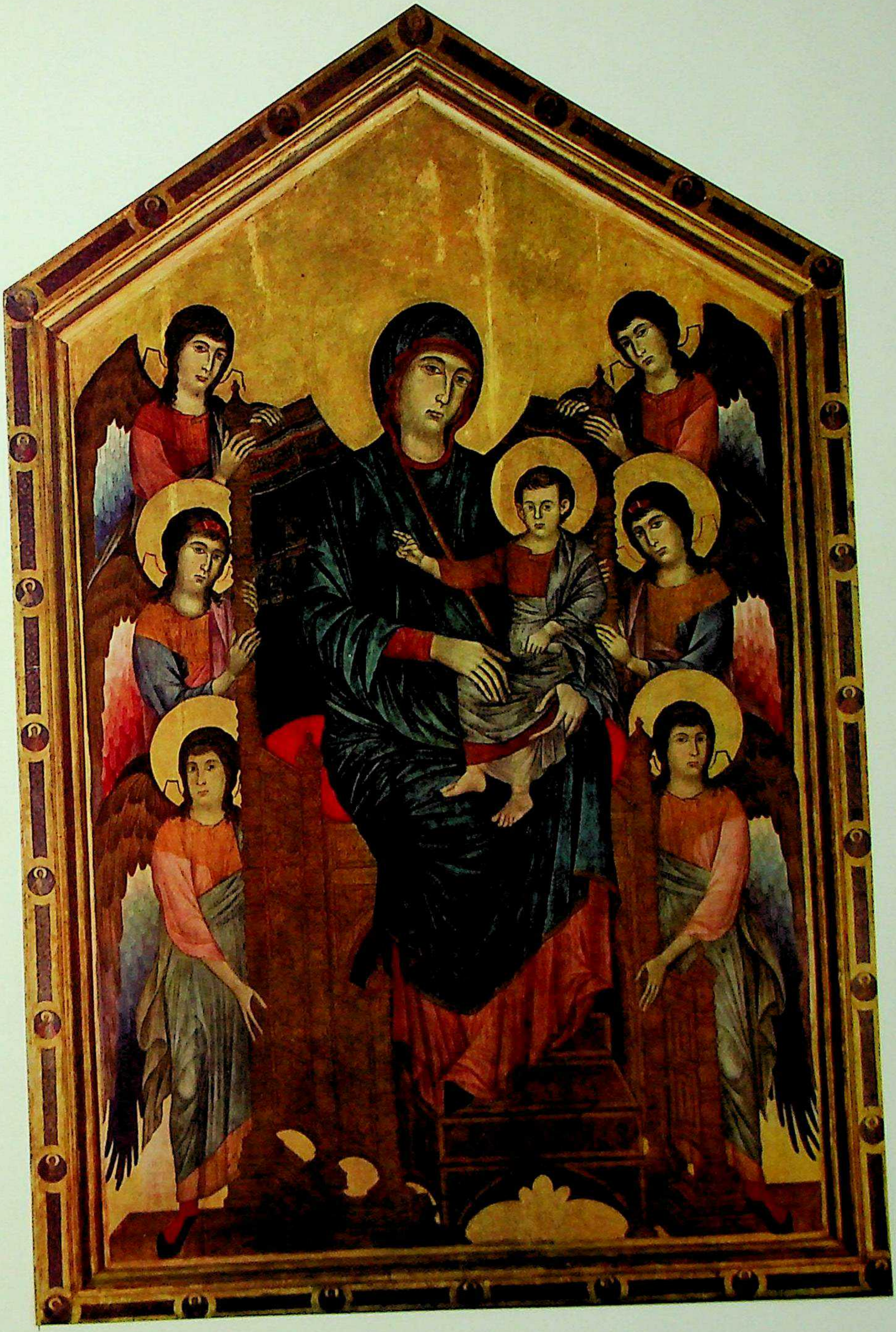
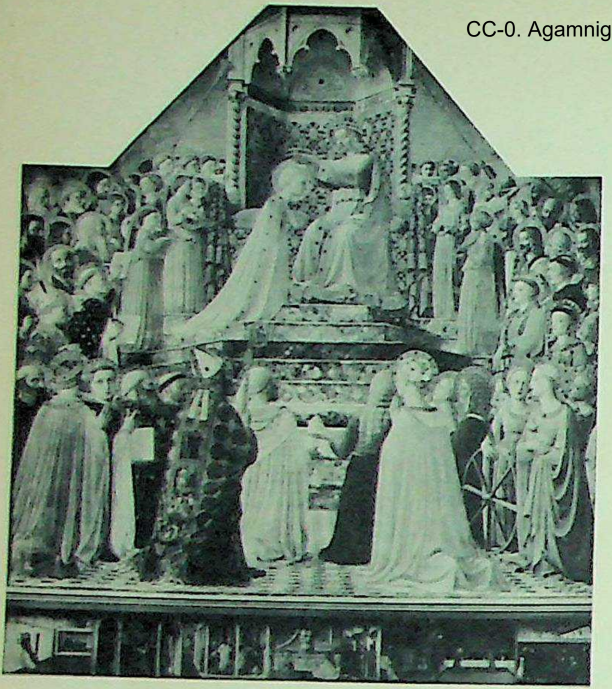




FRA ANGELICO *Florentine, 1387-1455*
THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN
Tempera on wood. 83⅞ x 83⅛"

To the music of an angelic concert, Christ, seated on a Gothic throne, places the crown of glory on the head of a young and slender Virgin, while saints, prophets, and apostles kneel in adoration—a perfect expression of serene faith.

UCCELLO *Florentine, 1397-1475*
THE BATTLE OF SAN ROMANO
Tempera on wood. 70⅞ x 124⅜"

Uccello was a friend of leading artists and scholars of the early Renaissance. His study of the geometry of forms and the new science of perspective are evident in this beautifully decorative scene commemorating a Florentine victory over Siena in 1432.

colorplate 2 ⟶

PISANELLO

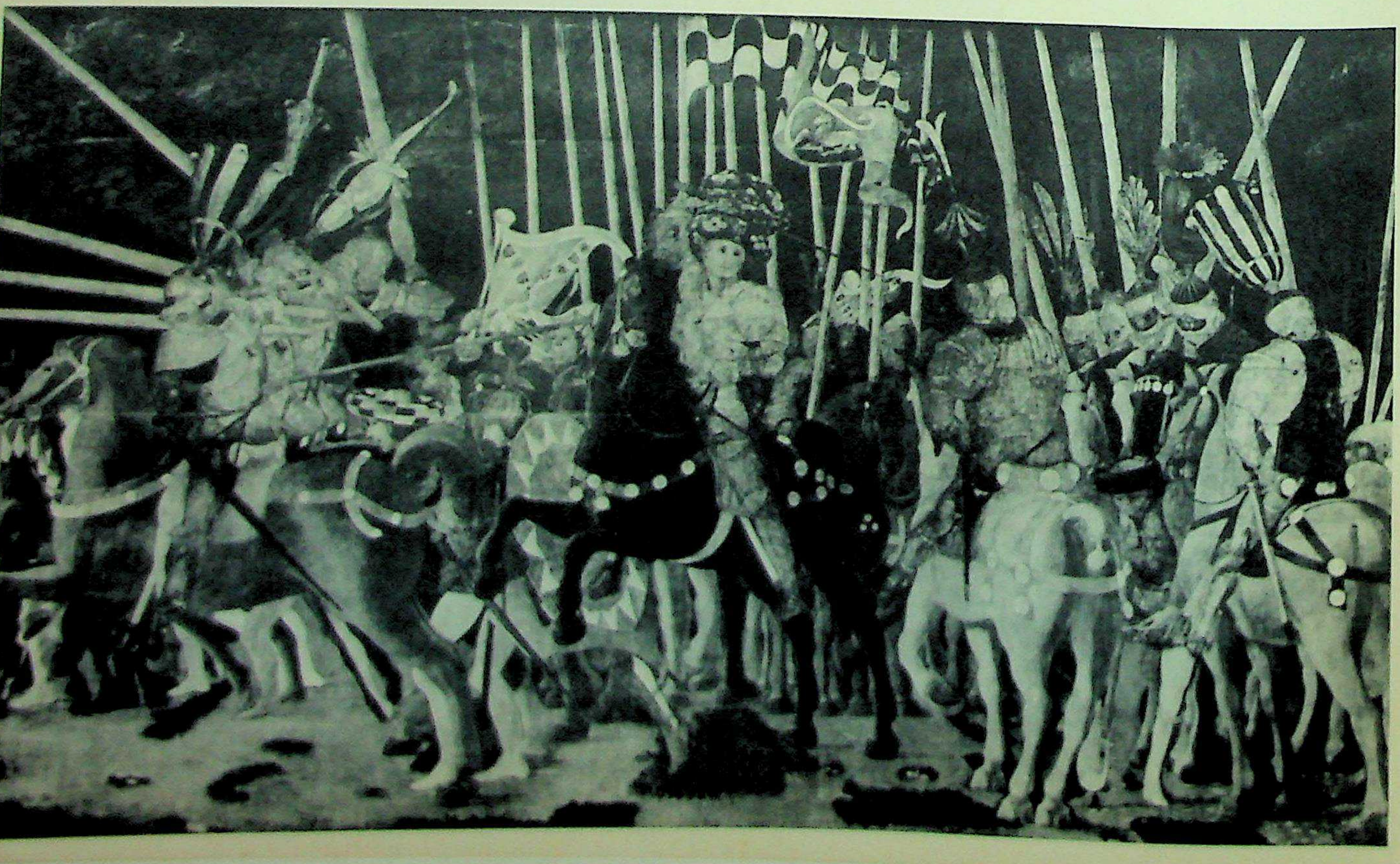
North Italian, 1395?-1455?

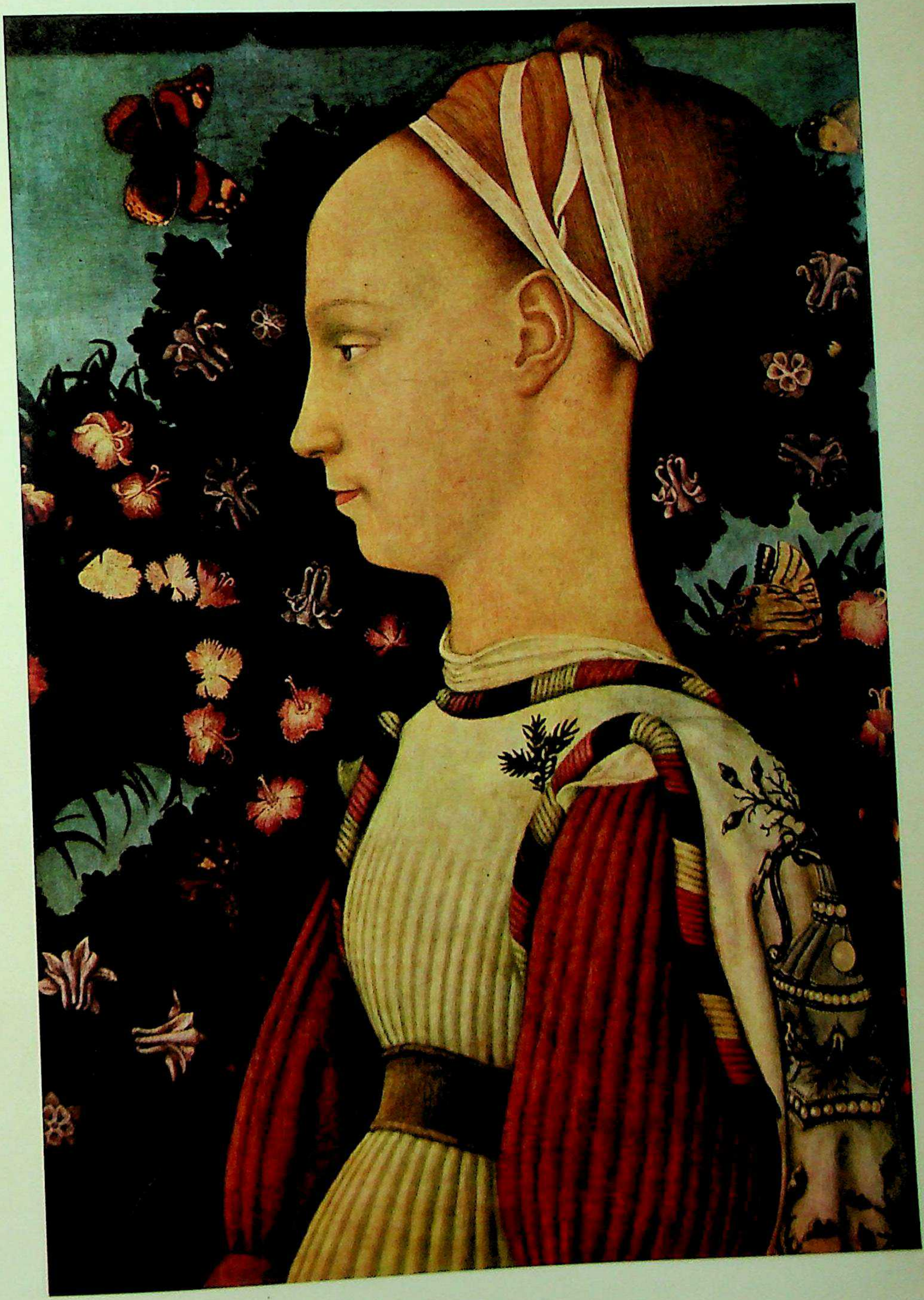
A PRINCESS OF THE ESTE FAMILY

Tempera on wood, 16⅞ x 11¾"

Celebrated as a medalist and decorator, Pisanello received many commissions from princely patrons throughout Italy. His courtly style, with its taste for narrative detail expressed with a refined elegance, was deeply imbued with the ideals of the international Gothic tradition which, originating in France, dominated western and central Europe in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

The flowers and butterflies painted in bright colors against the dark verdure of this portrait rival the work of medieval manuscript illuminators. Against this background Pisanello has sensitively traced the sinuous arabesque of bust, neck, and face, exercising the same virtuosity and precision as when chiseling the fine, exact lines of his portraits on medals. We do not know the identity of this charming young princess, gowned and coifed in what is clearly the latest fashion. But the similarity between the flower vase embroidered on her sleeve and a like motif on Pisanello's medal of Lionello d'Este suggests that she was a princess of the Este family of Ferrara.





colorplate 3 ⟶

BALDOVINETTI

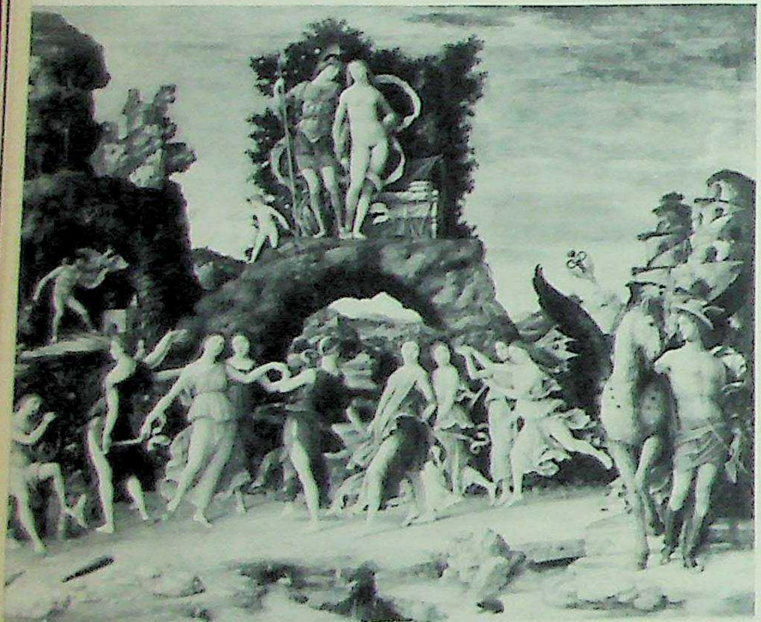
Florentine, 1425-1499

VIRGIN AND CHILD

Tempera and oil on canvas, 41 x 29⅞″

Born probably in Florence, Baldovinetti was a pupil and collaborator of Fra Angelico. From Domenico Veneziano, under whom he also worked, he acquired a taste for enamel-like colors and vast, deeply recessed landscape vistas.

In this painting, which is highly characteristic of the work of the second generation of Florentine artists of the fifteenth century, the purity and subtlety of line and the graceful modeling are accompanied by a knowing use of light to unify the diverse elements of the composition. Contrasted with a panorama rich in picturesque details, the pyramidlike silhouette of the Virgin in adoration has a massive grandeur. Even though the painting is sincerely religious in feeling, its subordination of sentiment to an ideal of formal elegance already foreshadows the spirit of the High Renaissance.



MANTEGNA *North Italian, 1431-1506*

PARNASSUS

Oil and tempera on canvas, 63 x 75⅝″

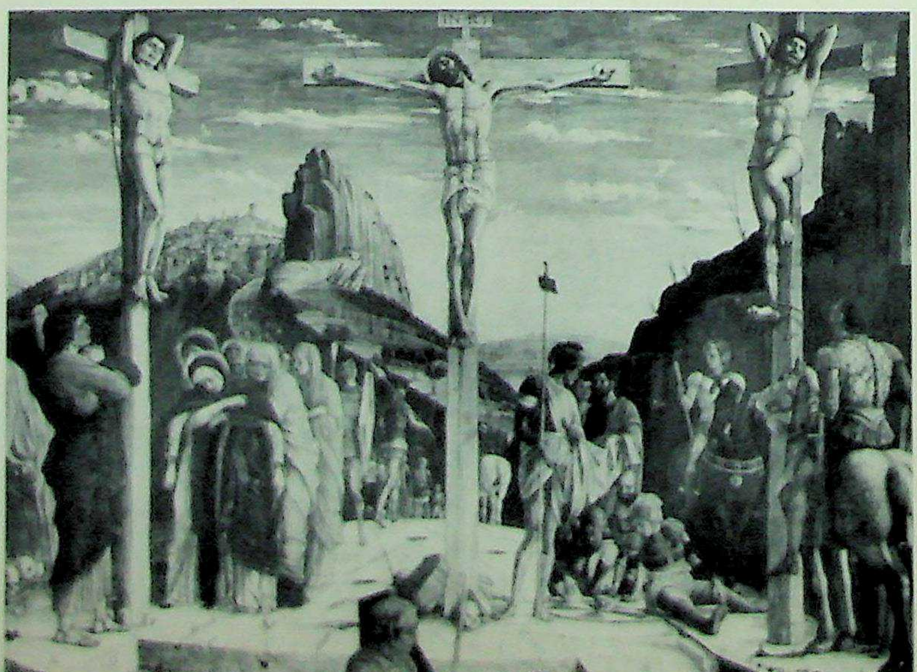
Mantegna painted this mythological subject for the famous studiolo of Isabella d'Este, Duchess of Mantua. The painting might be better entitled "The Triumph of Love and Beauty"; Mars and Venus dominate the scene with all the splendor of their youthful forms.

MANTEGNA *North Italian, 1431-1506*

CALVARY

Tempera and oil on wood, 26⅜ x 36⅝″

The Renaissance humanist's passion for antiquity is strikingly apparent in Mantegna's work. The beauty and simplicity of form in this Calvary recall classical bas-reliefs, while the drama inherent in its theme is intensified by the scientific logic of its composition. Whether he is depicting flesh, wood, or cloth, Mantegna gives his material substances the maximum of density.



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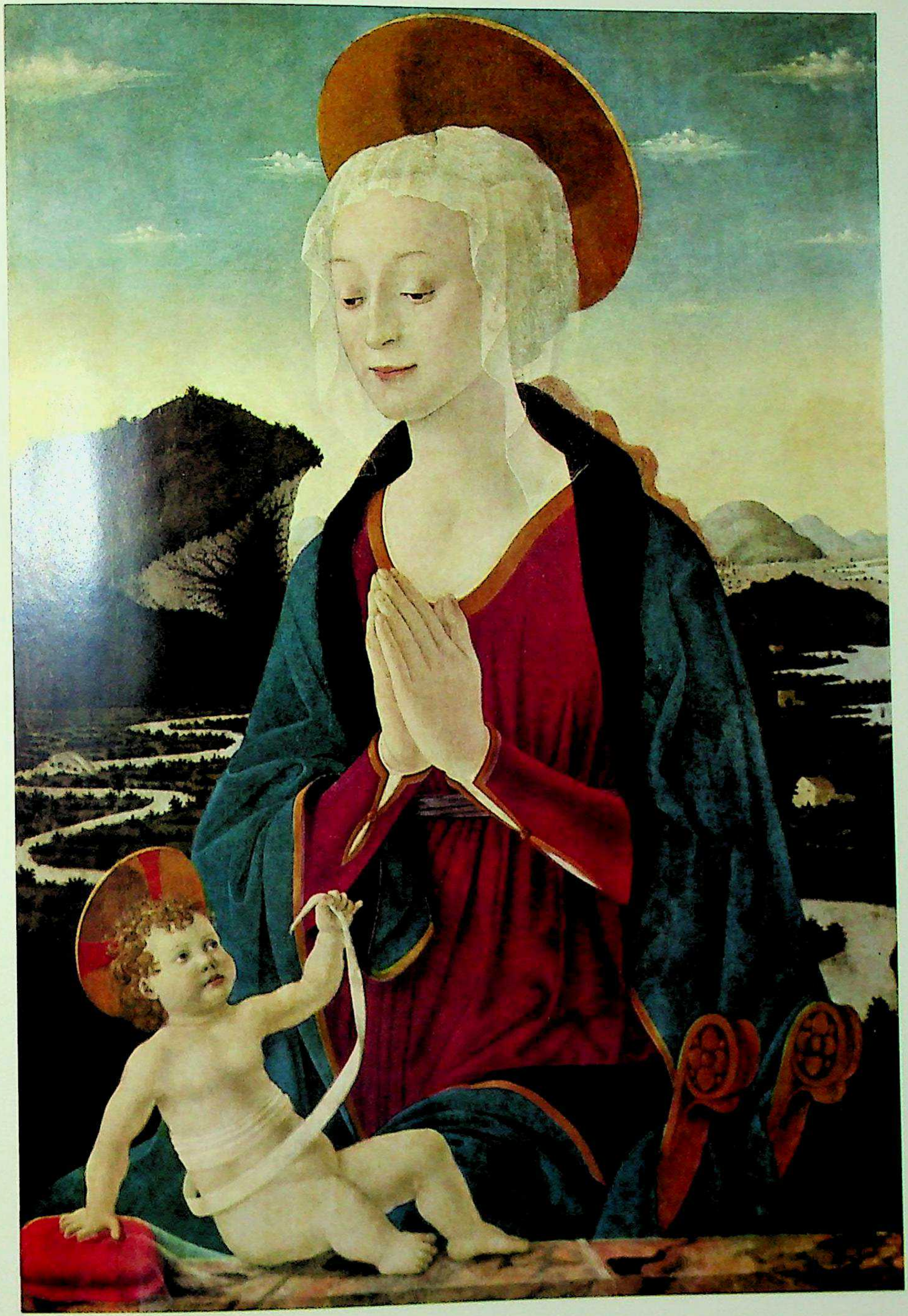
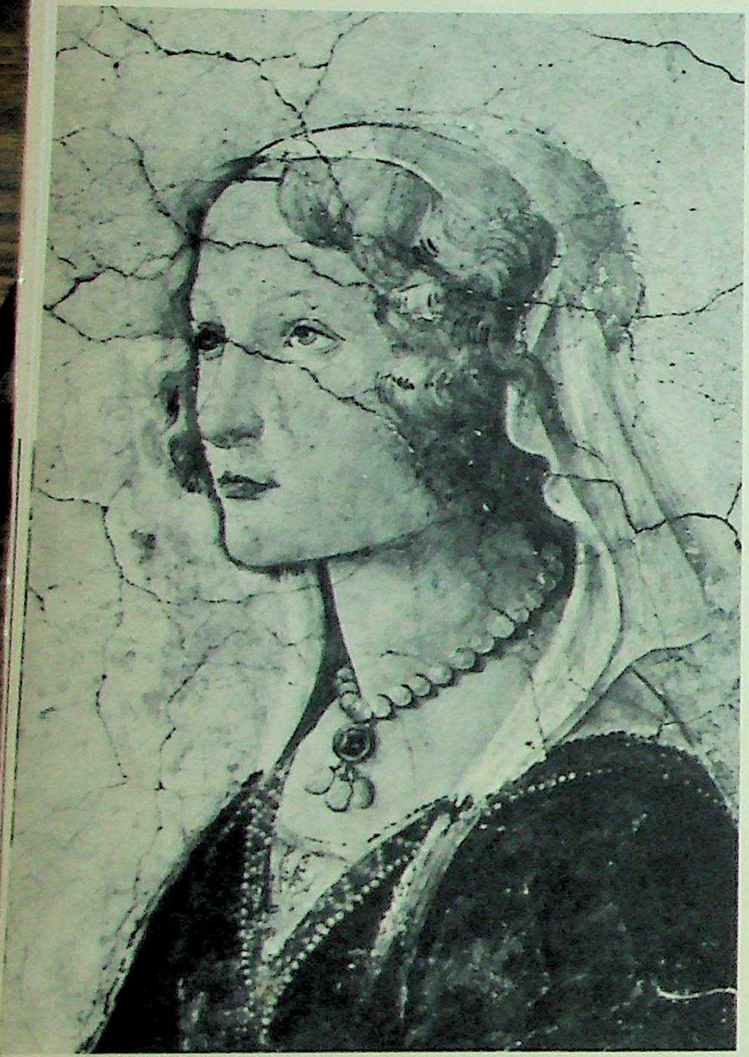




detail of colorplate at right

colorplate 4 →

BOTTICELLI

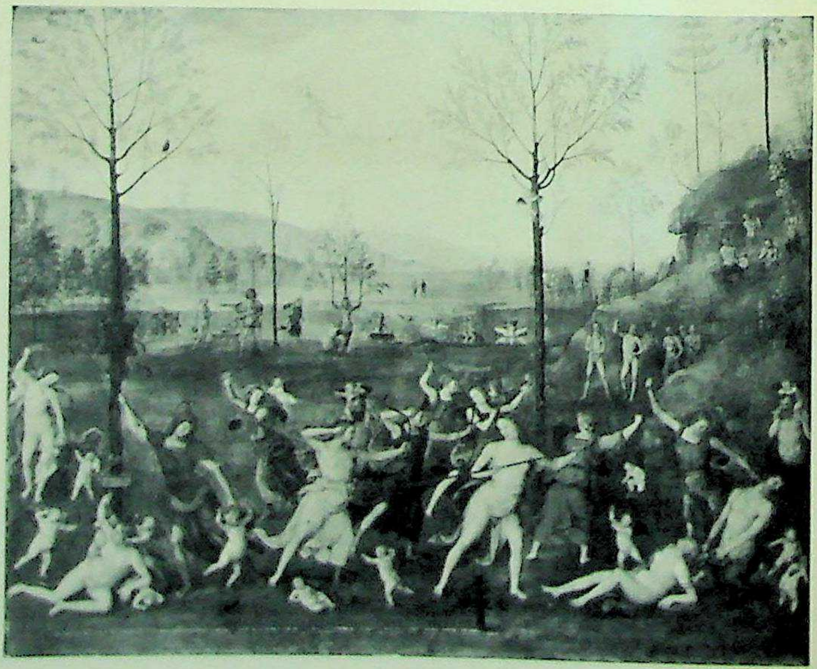
Florentine, 1444?-1510

A LADY AND FOUR ALLEGORICAL FIGURES

Fresco, 83½ x 111¾"

This is one of a pair of frescoes discovered in 1873 in the Villa Lemmi, a few miles from Florence. The owner of the villa, noticing traces of painting under the whitewash in one of the rooms, exposed these frescoes. From 1459 to 1591 the house had belonged to the Tornabuoni family, and we know that Botticelli (and Ghirlandaio) had decorated the Palazzo Tornabuoni in Florence shortly after his return from Rome. The poised and rhythmic grace of the figures in this fresco and the visual poetry of the draperies and gestures are completely characteristic of Botticelli.

Despite attempts to identify the gentle bride in this fresco as a member of the Tornabuoni family we do not actually know who she is. She extends her wedding veil for the blessing of Venus and the Three Graces who enter from the left. The picture indicates the favors which the goddess of Love and Humanity bestows upon her followers.

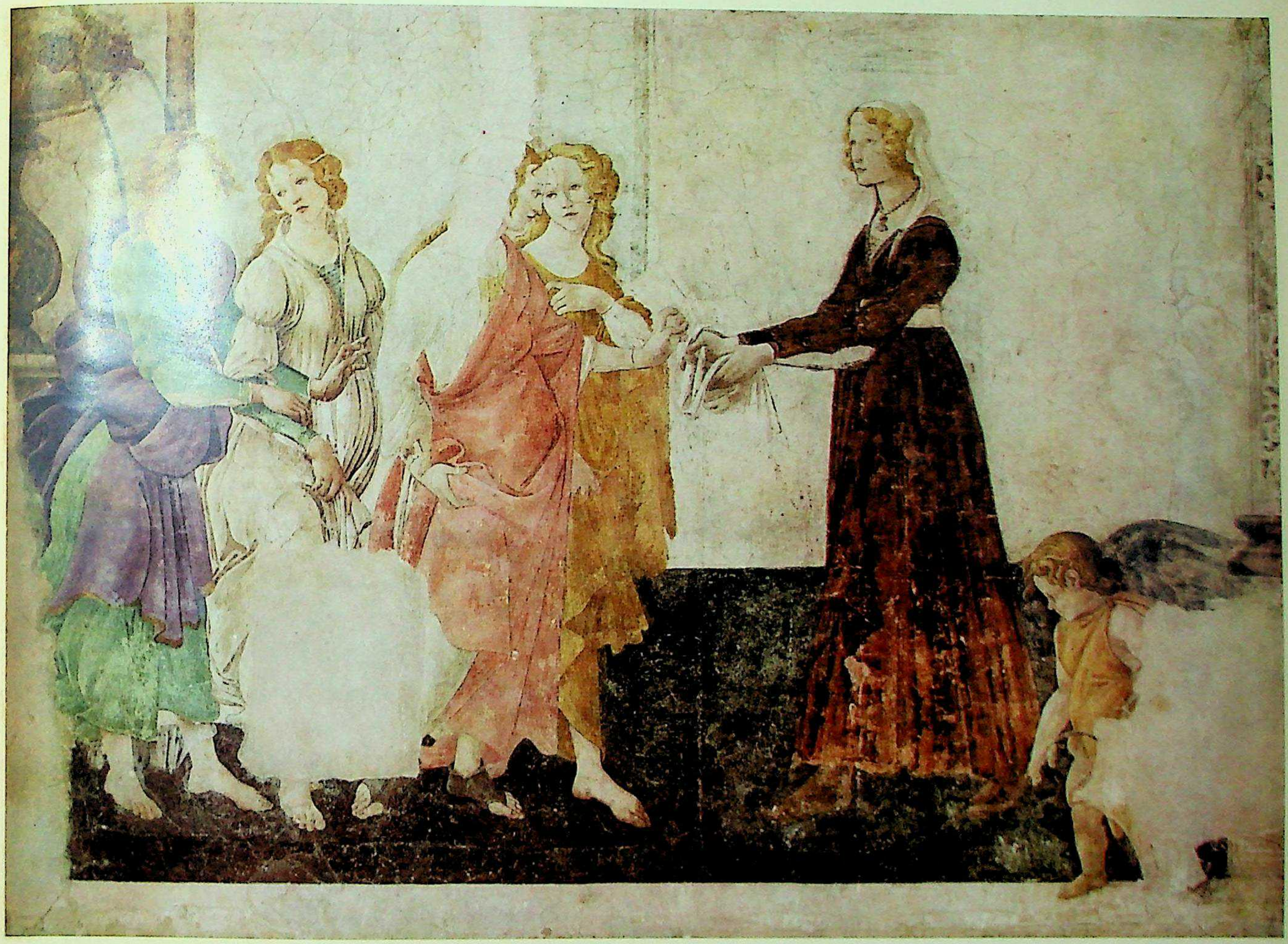


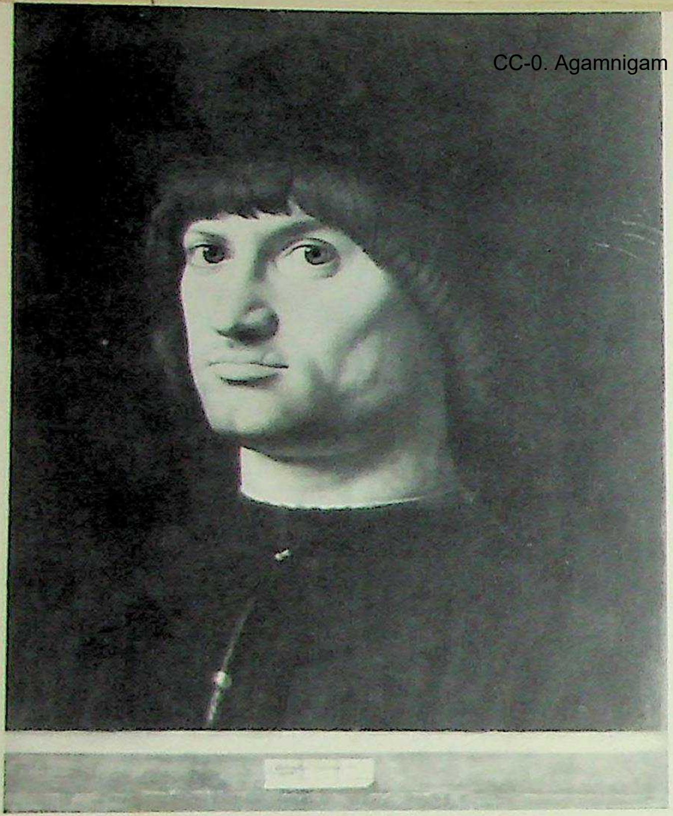
PERUGINO *Umbrian, 1445-1523*

BATTLE BETWEEN LOVE AND CHASTITY

Tempera on wood. 66⅝ x 46⅝"

Primarily a painter of religious subjects, Perugino executed this elaborate mythological painting for Isabella d'Este, with much delay. Its subject was strictly prescribed: Minerva and Diana were to be opposed in struggle to Venus and Cupid.





ANTONELLO DA MESSINA
North Italian, 1430?-1479
A CONDOTTIERE
Oil on wood. 13¾ x 11″

This portrait is typical of Antonello's close scrutiny of expressive traits; the contemptuous and commanding expression suggests that the sitter was one of the freebooting captains so well known to Renaissance Italy.

colorplate 5 ⟶

GHIRLANDAIO

Florentine, 1449-1494

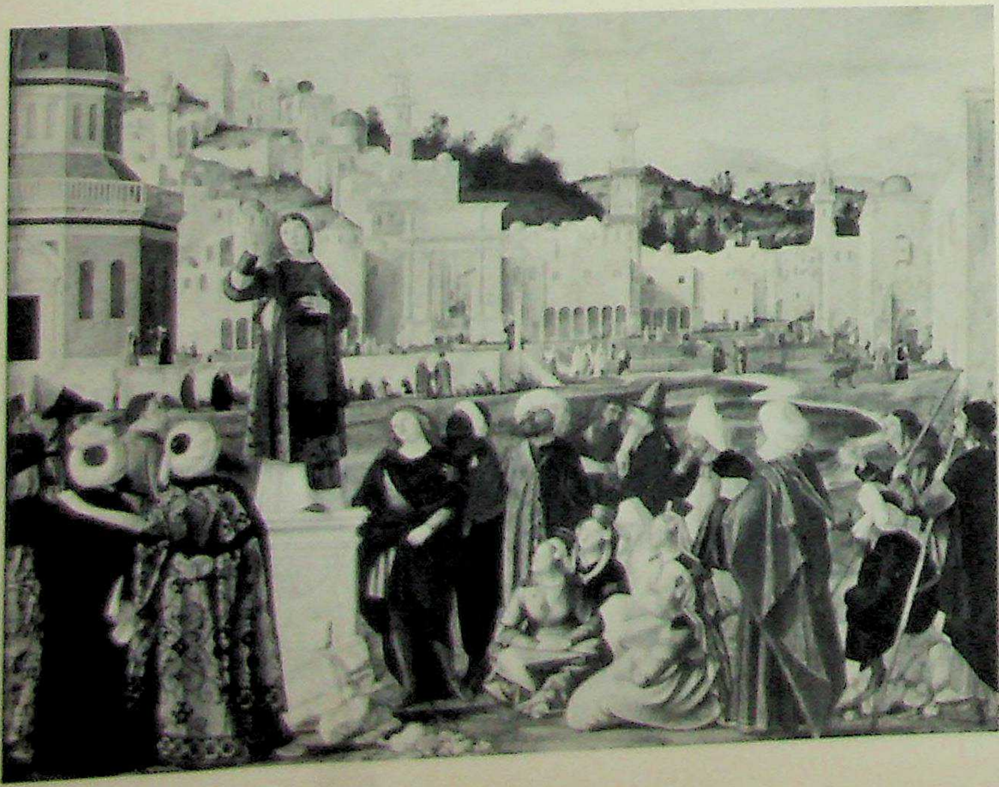
AN OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON
Tempera and oil on wood, 24⅞ x 18⅛″

Perhaps the most typical if not the most original artist of the fifteenth century in Florence, Ghirlandaio studied with Baldovinetti, worked side by side with Botticelli, and was one of Michelangelo's teachers. He is a master of harmonious drawing, orderly composition, and fresh, agreeable color, and his keen observation of picturesque details often led him to transform his religious paintings into scenes of daily life peopled with well-known Florentine personages.

These qualities are apparent in this double portrait which combines keen interest in the subject with undeniable brilliance of rendition. The somewhat grotesque face of the unidentified old man is transformed by the kindly smile he directs toward the young boy, who returns his grandfather's glance with confident affection. The area of light from the open window is skillfully used to give depth to the composition and to balance the oblique line formed by the two figures.

CARPACCIO *Venetian, c. 1455-1526*
SAINT STEPHEN PREACHING IN JERUSALEM
Oil and tempera on canvas. 60 x 76¾″

Influenced in his style and treatment by the tradition of Gentile Bellini and the Paduan School, Carpaccio was a precise and observant storyteller; against a background of minarets St. Stephen is represented preaching from the pedestal of an overturned pagan idol.



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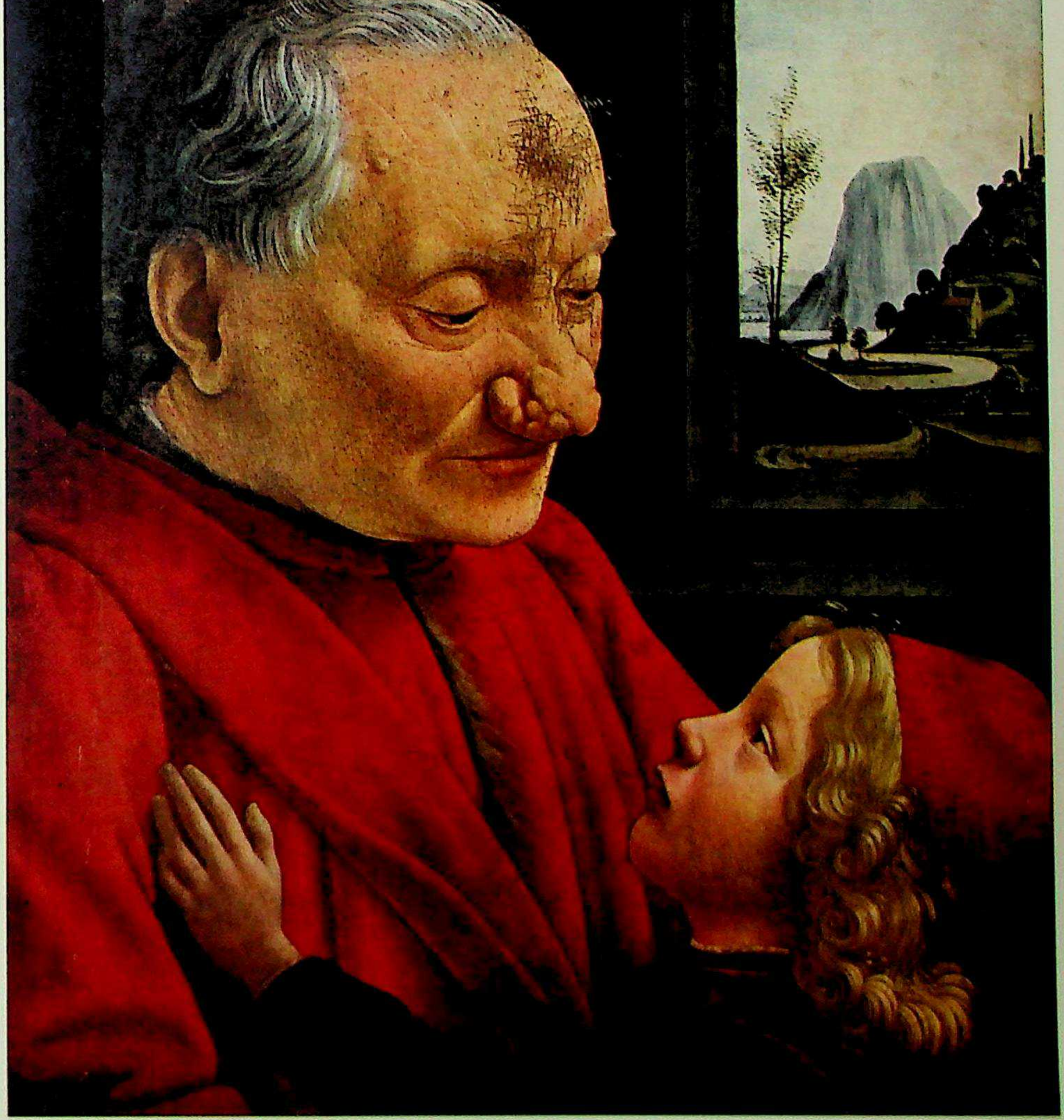
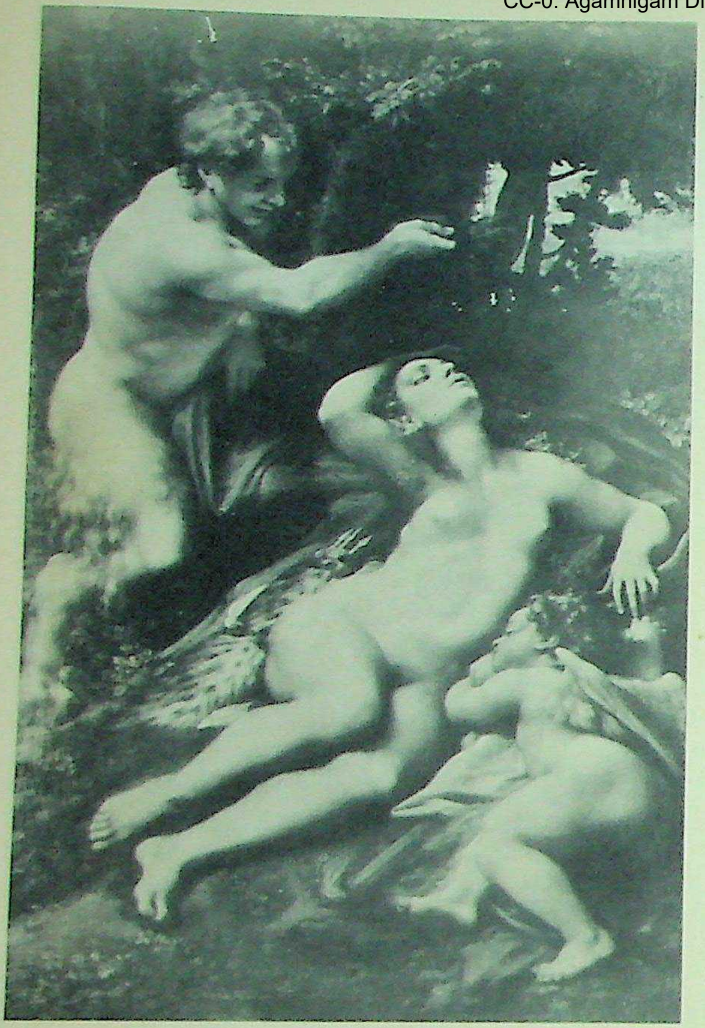




CORREGGIO *North Italian, 1498-1534*
JUPITER AND ANTIOPE
Oil on canvas. 74¾ x 48⅜″

This is one of several compositions of a mythological character which Correggio painted for Federigo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. The ideal of feminine beauty represented in this painting—so gentle, languid, and charming—was particularly admired in the eighteenth century.

colorplate 6 ⟶

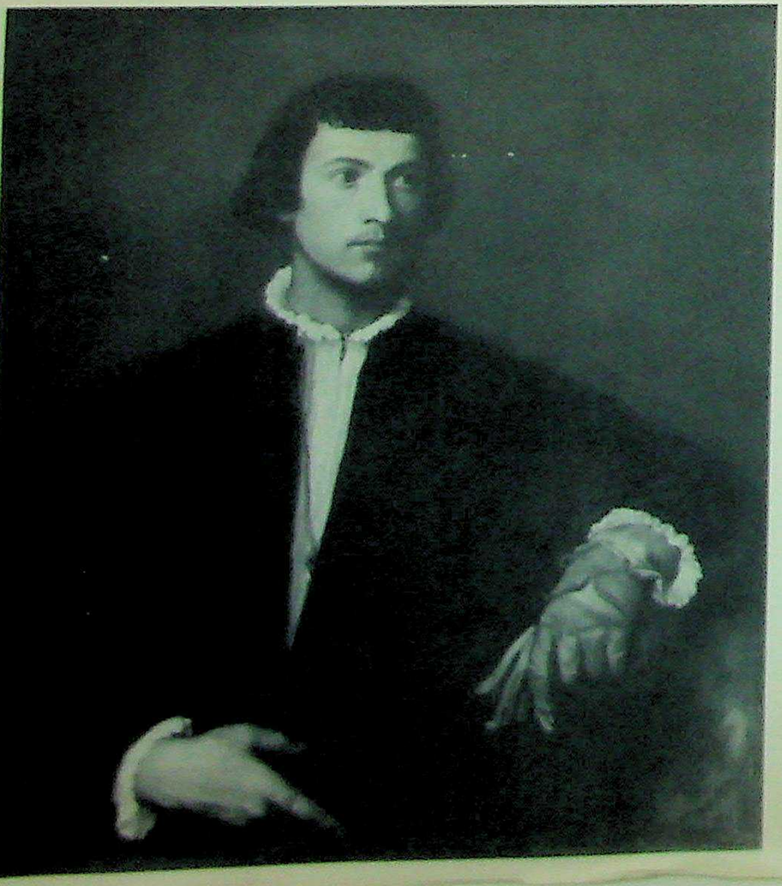
GIORGIONE

Venetian, 1477?-1510

PASTORAL CONCERT
Oil on canvas, 43½ x 54⅜″

Little is known of Giorgione's life. He was born near Venice, trained in the studio of Giovanni Bellini, and died while still in his early thirties. But the few paintings he produced in his short life exerted a great influence on the artists of his generation. Giorgione's lyrical imagination and his innovations in light and color enabled his friend and disciple Titian, and later, Tintoretto and Veronese, to attain harmonies unparalleled in Western art.

The real subject of this *Pastoral Concert,* which once belonged to King Charles I of England, is the beauty of the female body and the beauty of nature in the lingering golden light. The overtone of gentle melancholy tells us that the music will soon fade, the moment pass. The spectator's sensibility is awakened through a scene of evocative charm that eludes precise interpretation. This is the special gift of Giorgione, a capricious, independent artist whose individualism makes him, in a sense, the first of the moderns.



TITIAN *Venetian, 1477?-1576*
MAN WITH A GLOVE
Oil on canvas. 39⅜ x 35″

This is one of Titian's earliest portraits and one of his most perfect and most justly admired works. Despite many ingenious theories the identity of the subject remains unknown. This portrait was once in the collection of Louis XIV.

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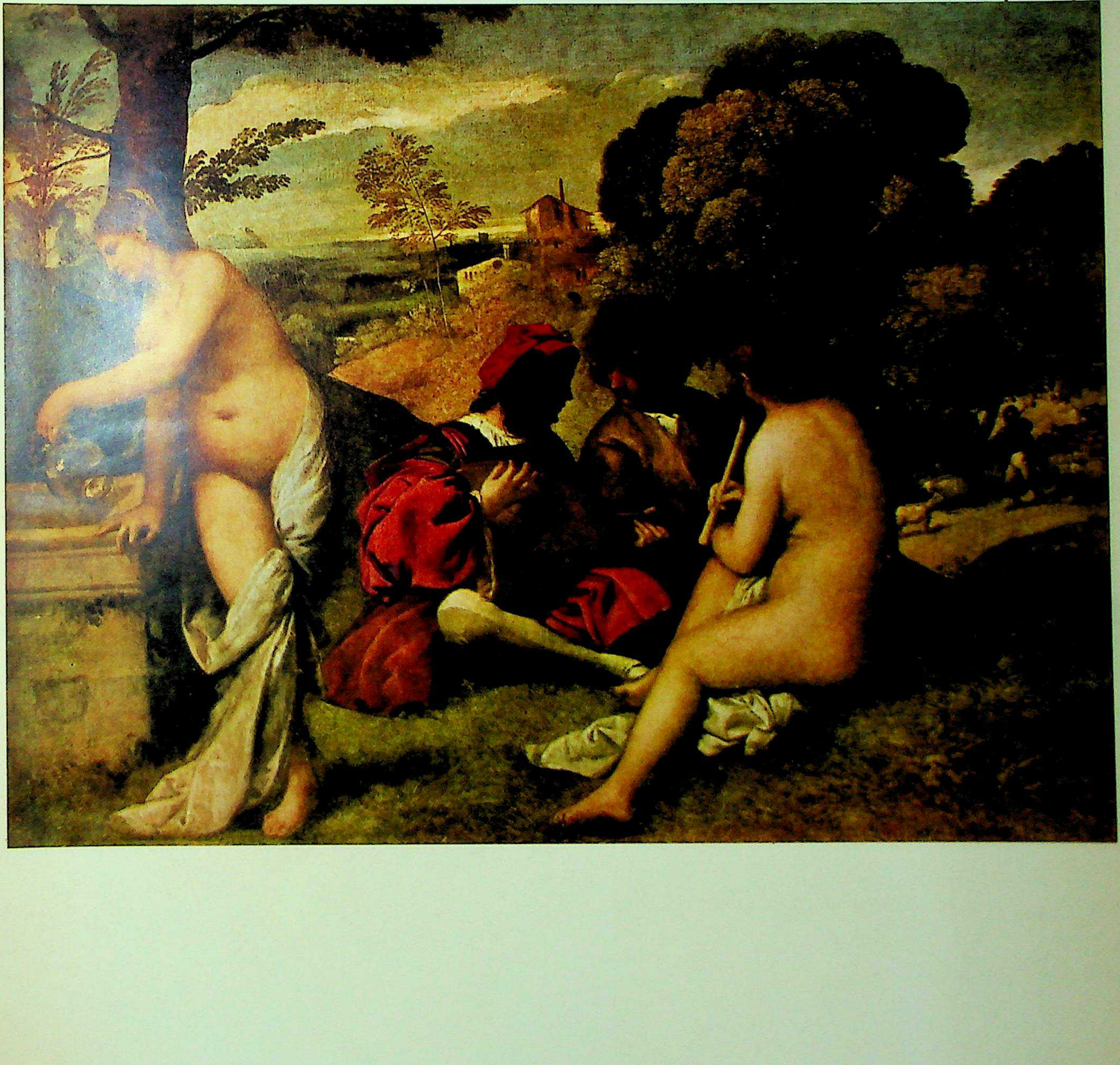


colorplate 7 ⟶

RAPHAEL

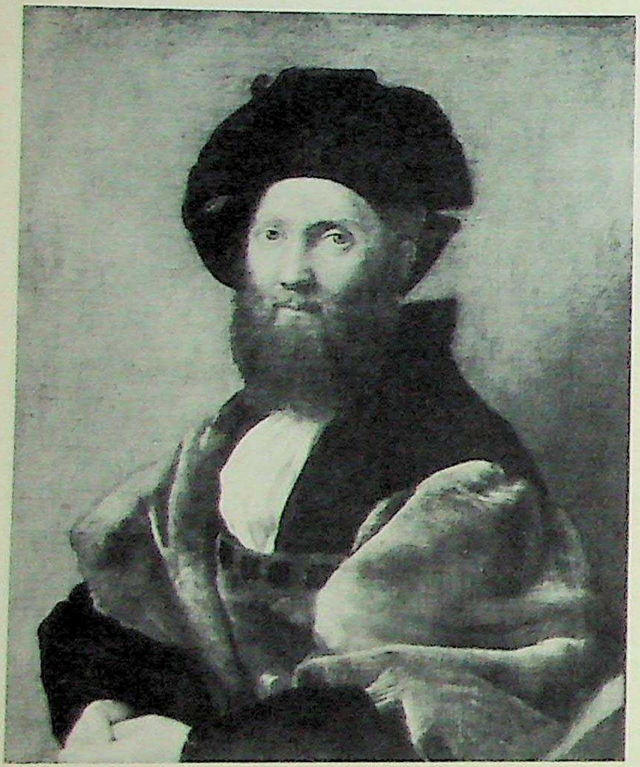
Florentine, 1483-1520

LA BELLE JARDINIERE

Oil on wood, 48 x 31½″

Raphael Sanzio was born in Urbino. At sixteen he was apprenticed to Perugino, whose delicacy of composition and decorative sense had a great effect on him. From 1506-08 Raphael lived in Florence where Leonardo and Michelangelo helped to form his mature style, with its facility of draftsmanship and supreme mastery of composition. In 1508 Pope Julius II called him to Rome to decorate the Stanze in the Vatican. His frescoes of the *Disputa* and the *School of Athens* rivaled Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel. His color, under the influence of Venetian painting or of newly discovered Roman murals, became increasingly rich. Overwhelmed with commissions and official responsibilities, he died at thirty-seven, widely mourned for his goodness and for his genius.

This Virgin and Child with St. John, traditionally called *La Belle Jardinière,* is the finest version of a subject for which Raphael had, after his stay in Florence, a marked preference; it enabled him to give expression to his tender sensibility and religious feeling. The formal harmony of the composition is only one of its delights. The pose of the Child leaning against the Virgin, his arms forming a continuous line with hers, while he glances up at her confidingly, contributes a perfect note of sincere sentiment.

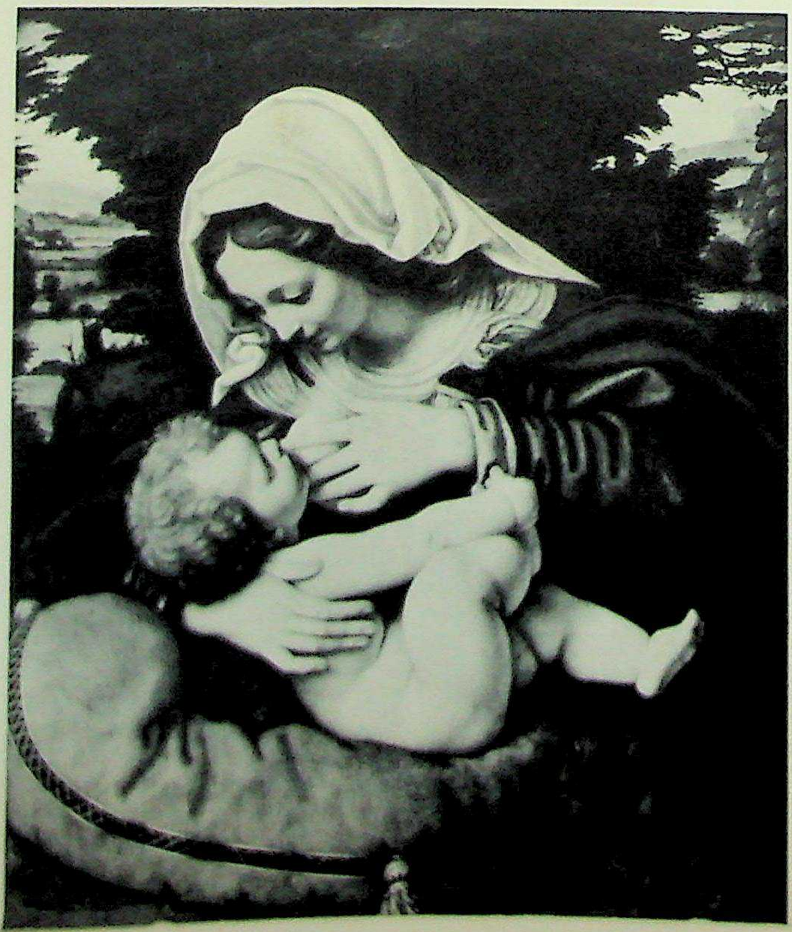


RAPHAEL *Florentine, 1483-1520*

PORTRAIT OF BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE

Oil on canvas. 32¼ x 26⅜″

The subject of this portrait is best known as the author of The Courtier, *a classic account of the Renaissance ideal man. It is interesting that Rembrandt once tried (unsuccessfully) to buy this portrait at auction and remembered it all his life, painting himself twice in this pose and style.*

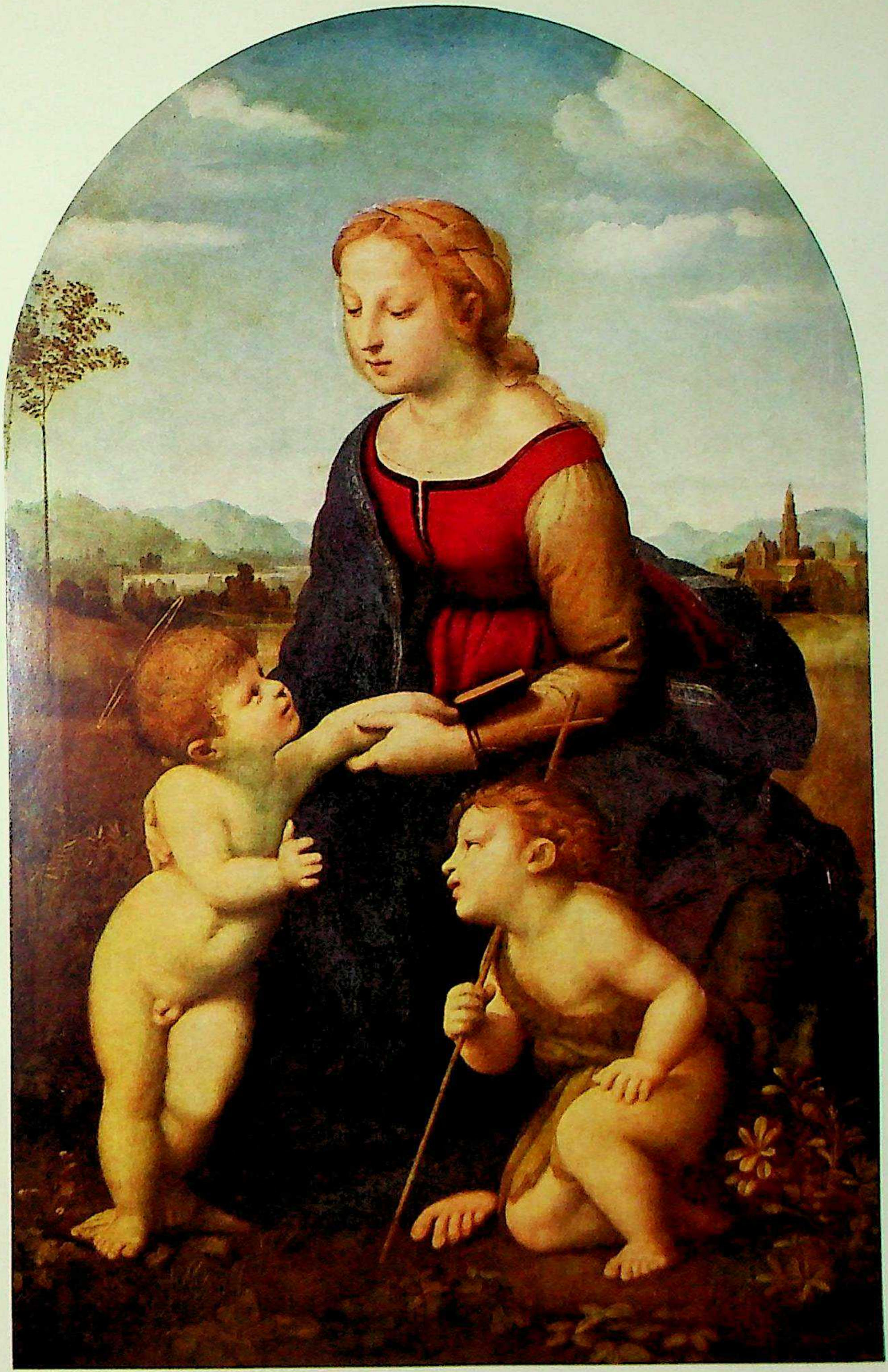


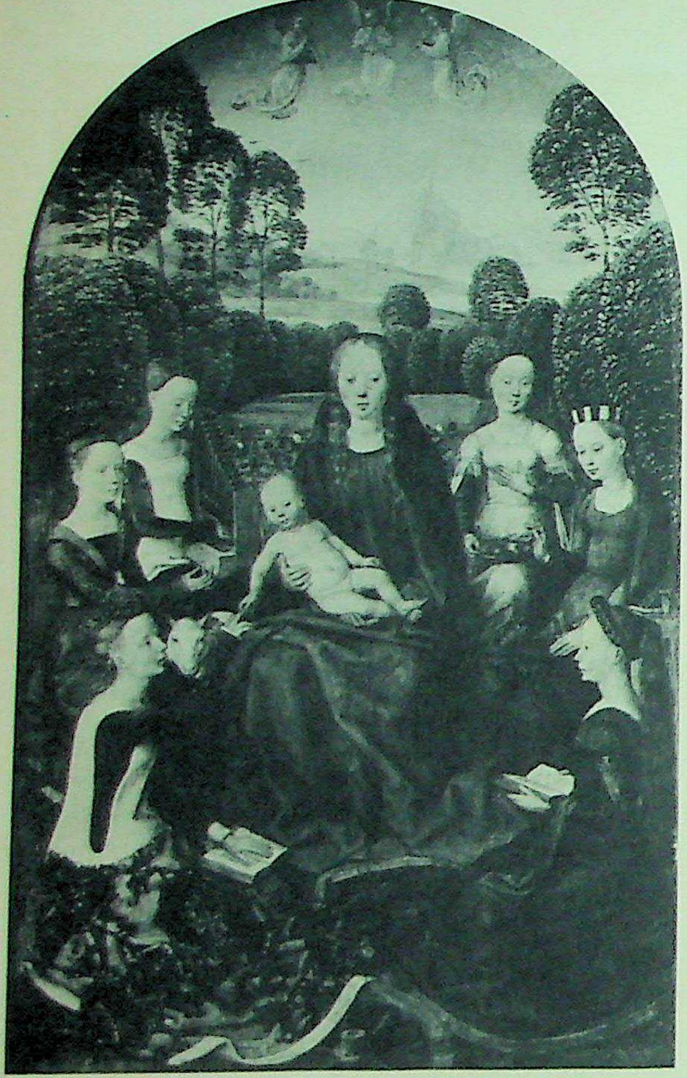
SOLARIO *Milanese, 1460?-1520?*

MADONNA OF THE GREEN CUSHION

Oil on wood. 25⅝ x 19⅝″

One of Leonardo da Vinci's leading disciples, Solario is represented in the Louvre by four major canvases. This Madonna of the Green Cushion *was probably brought to France by Cardinal Georges d'Amboise; in 1742 it was bought by Louis XV and installed at Versailles.*





colorplate 8 →

GERARD DAVID

Flemish, 1450?-1523

THE WEDDING AT CANA

Tempera and oil on wood, 37¾ x 50⅜"

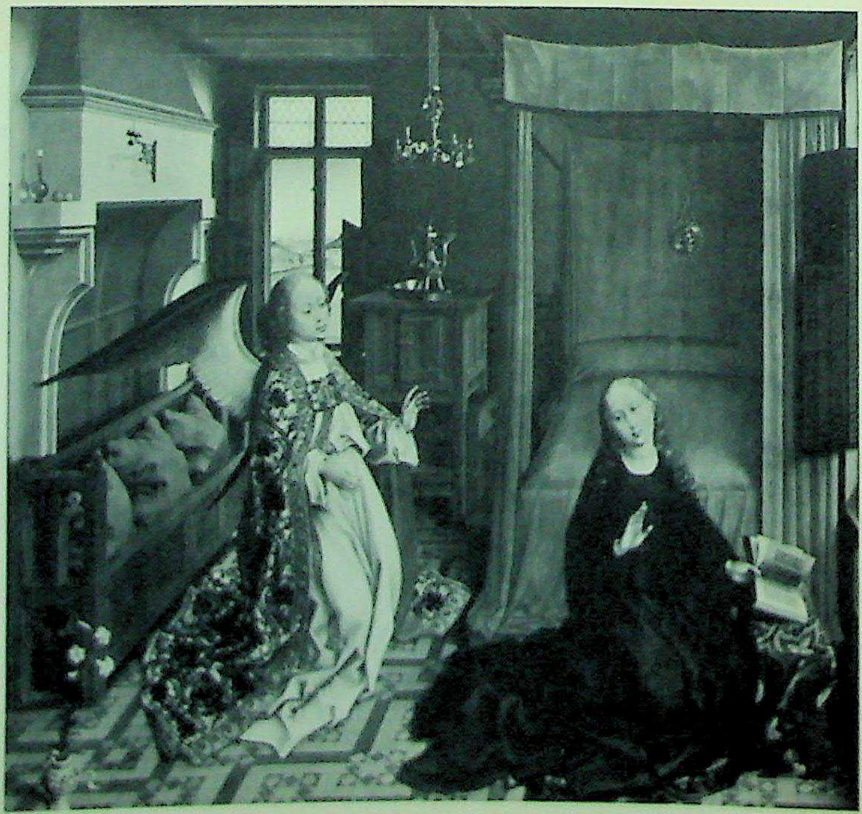
The bride is at the center of the table; Christ and the Virgin sit to one side among the other guests, who show no surprise at the miracle of changing the water into wine. Although it ostensibly represents a miracle, the *Wedding at Cana* seems really to be a celebration at a prosperous middle-class house in Bruges. A tapestry of various plants hangs in the background, and a marble colonnade opens on to a city square. Each figure is fixed in its position, as are also the donors, who kneel in prayer at right and left. David is one of the last of the traditional Flemish painters of the fifteenth century.

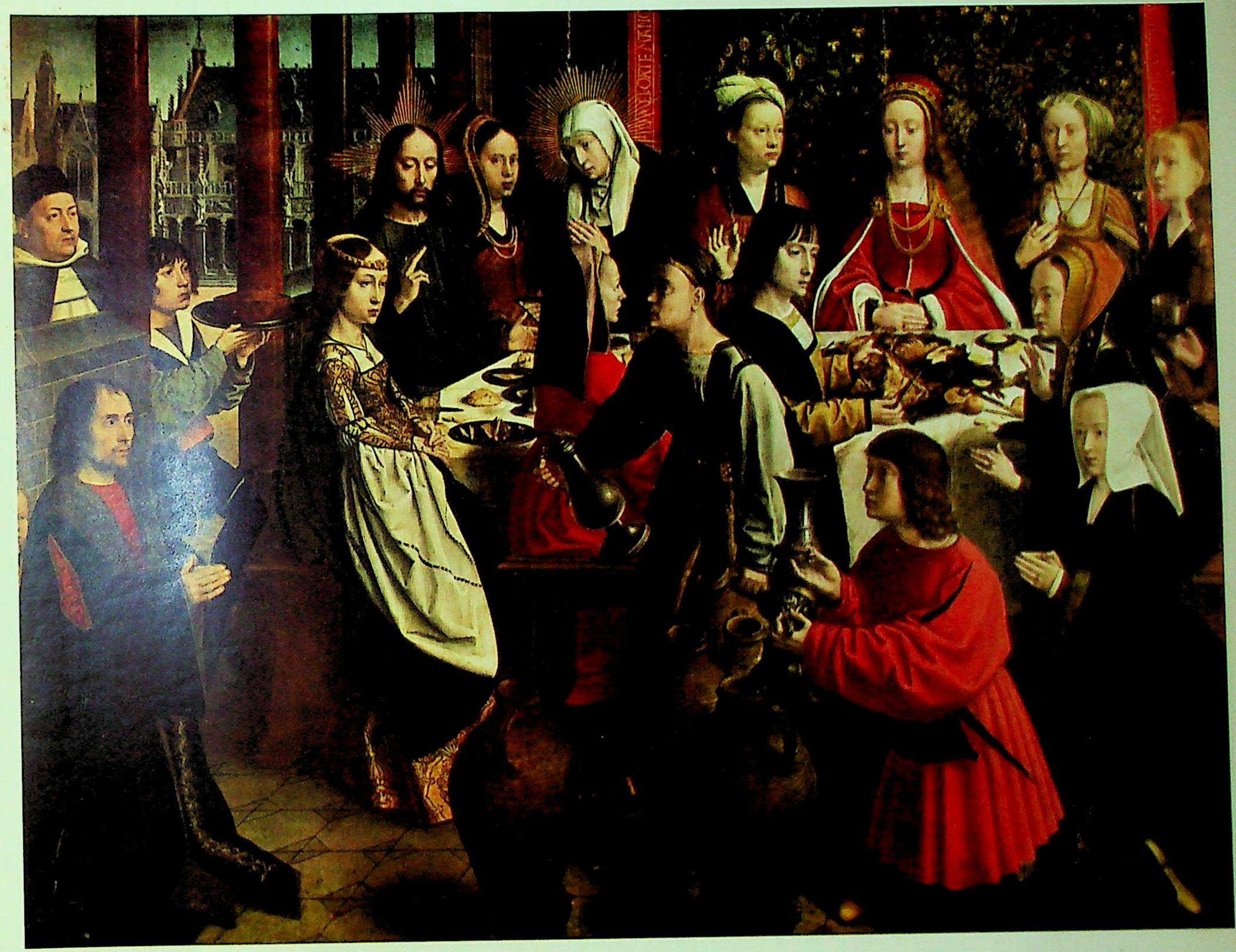
MEMLING *Flemish, 1433-1494*
THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE
OF SAINT CATHERINE
Tempera and oil on wood. 10⅝ x 5⅞"

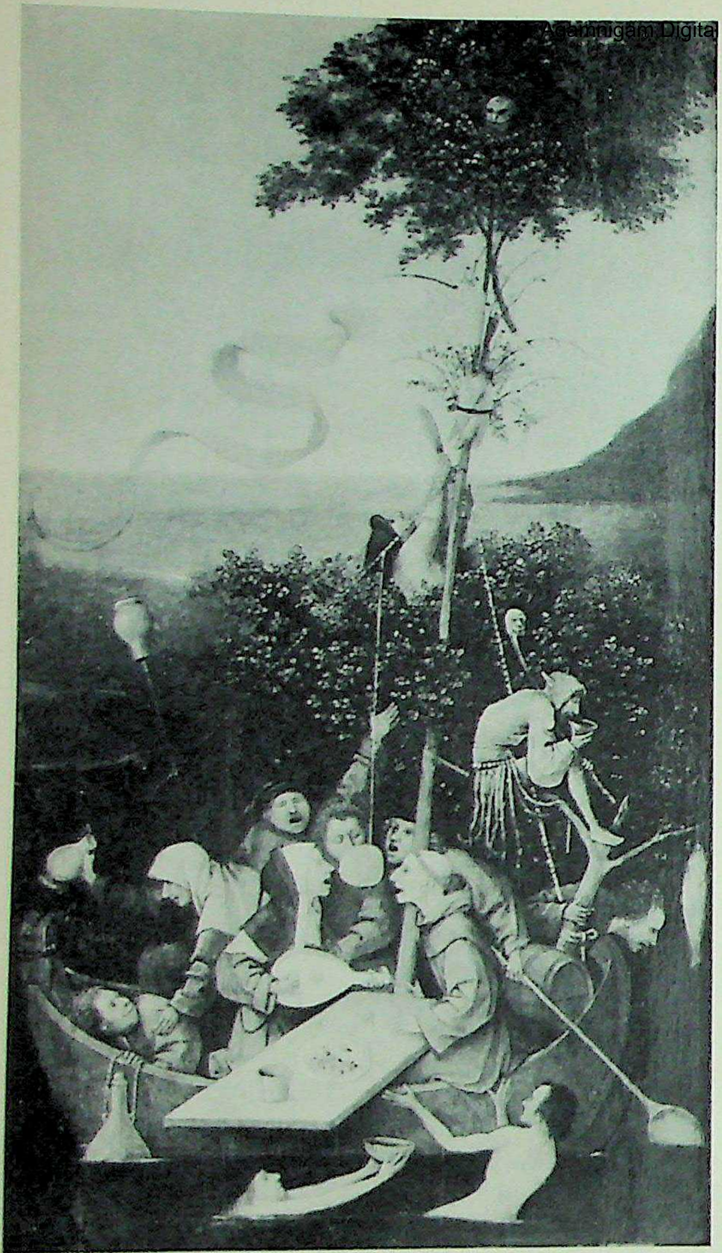
Seated in a verdant landscape, the Virgin Mary, holding the Child, places a mystic ring on St. Catherine's finger. In the surrounding group of saints Memling repeats the same female type with evident pleasure: the full oval face, arched eyes slightly raised at the sides—an inscrutable and gracious type.

VAN DER WEYDEN *Flemish, 1399-1465*
THE ANNUNCIATION
Tempera and oil on panel. 33⅞ x 36⅝"

This Annunciation is the central panel of triptych which Rogier painted in his youth. There are other treatments of the same subject by him, but he was never again to achieve the elegance of this vision of the angel in his sumptuous robe, or of the fragile, resigned grace of the Virgin.







BOSCH *Dutch, 1450?-1516?*
THE SHIP OF FOOLS
Tempera and oil on wood. 22 x 12¾"

Like Bruegel, Bosch was less interested in the usual subjects of European painting than in satirical themes and proverbs which he imbued with his own fantastic and surrealist imagination. The Ship of Fools was inspired by Sebastian Brant's book of the same title, a satirical account of mankind's voyage to the Isle of Folly.

colorplate 9 ⟶

MASSYS

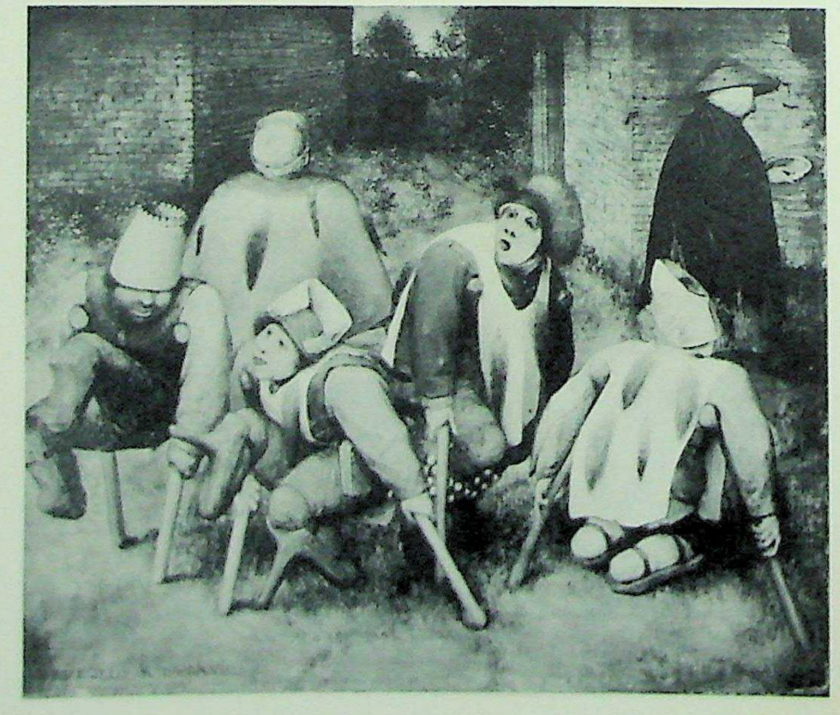
Flemish, c. 1466-1530

THE MONEYLENDER AND HIS WIFE

Tempera and oil on wood, 28 x 26¾"

The subject of the moneylender in his shop, which was regarded as an opportunity to paint still life with jewelry, was originally a religious theme, referring to St. Eligius, the legendary goldsmith. Massys has abandoned any religious pretext: he paints the moneylender as he must have seen him in Antwerp, surrounded by goldpieces and jewelry. These objects he paints solely for their own material beauty; he studies the quality of light as reflected from the mirror, the glass, and the stones.

The luminous atmosphere and beautiful painting of textures remind us of Jan van Eyck; but the vivid reporting of gestures and the diversity of the still-life objects suggest Massys' transition from fifteenth-century realism, which had religious undertones, to the secular realism of the next century.



BRUEGEL *Flemish, 1525-1569*
THE BEGGARS
Oil on wood. 7⅛ x 8½"

Bruegel's astonishing pictorial virtuosity makes this tiny panel appear so much larger than it actually is. His monumental composition gives dignity and even grandeur to these unhappy specimens of humanity. His forthright rendering of their misery foreshadows Callot and Rembrandt.

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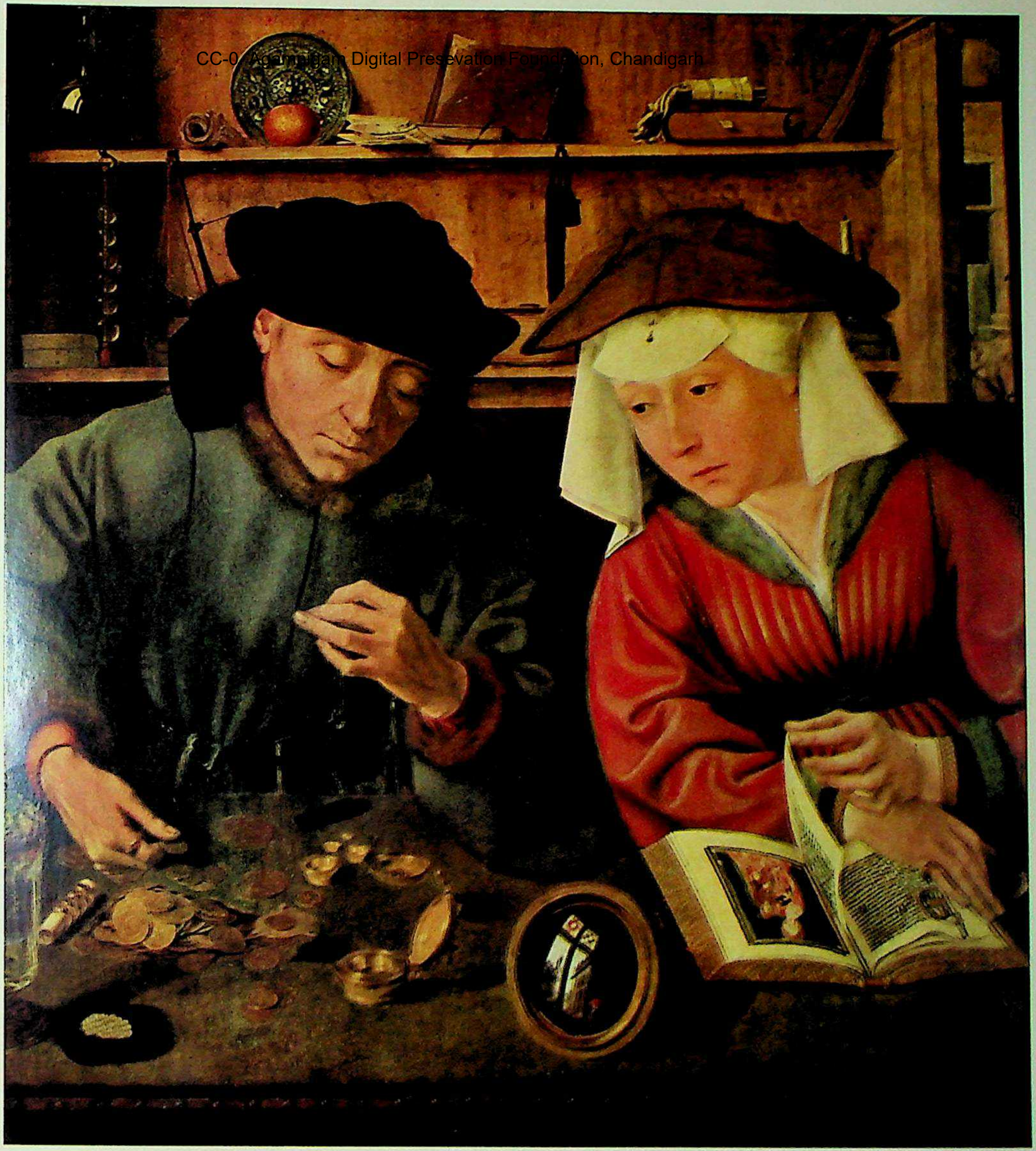
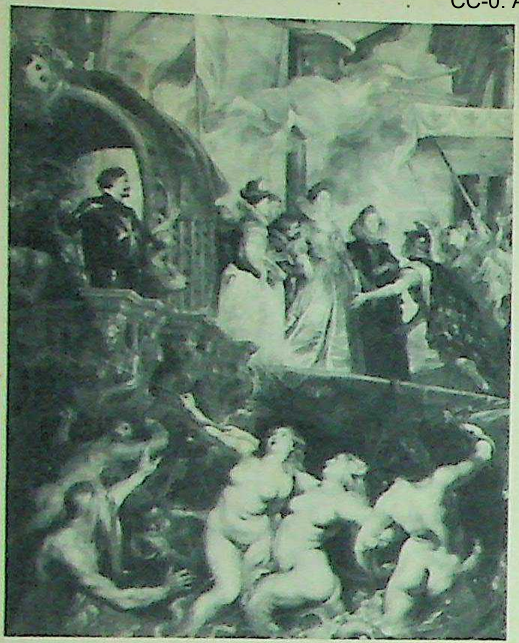




RUBENS *Flemish, 1577-1640*
THE LANDING OF MARIE DE MEDICIS
Oil on canvas. 155 x 116″

This is one of the twenty-two monumental paintings which Rubens executed between 1622 and 1625 in honor of the French Queen Mother. Originally in the Luxembourg Palace, the cycle now is one of the chief attractions of the Louvre.

colorplate 10 ⟶

RUBENS

Flemish, 1577-1640

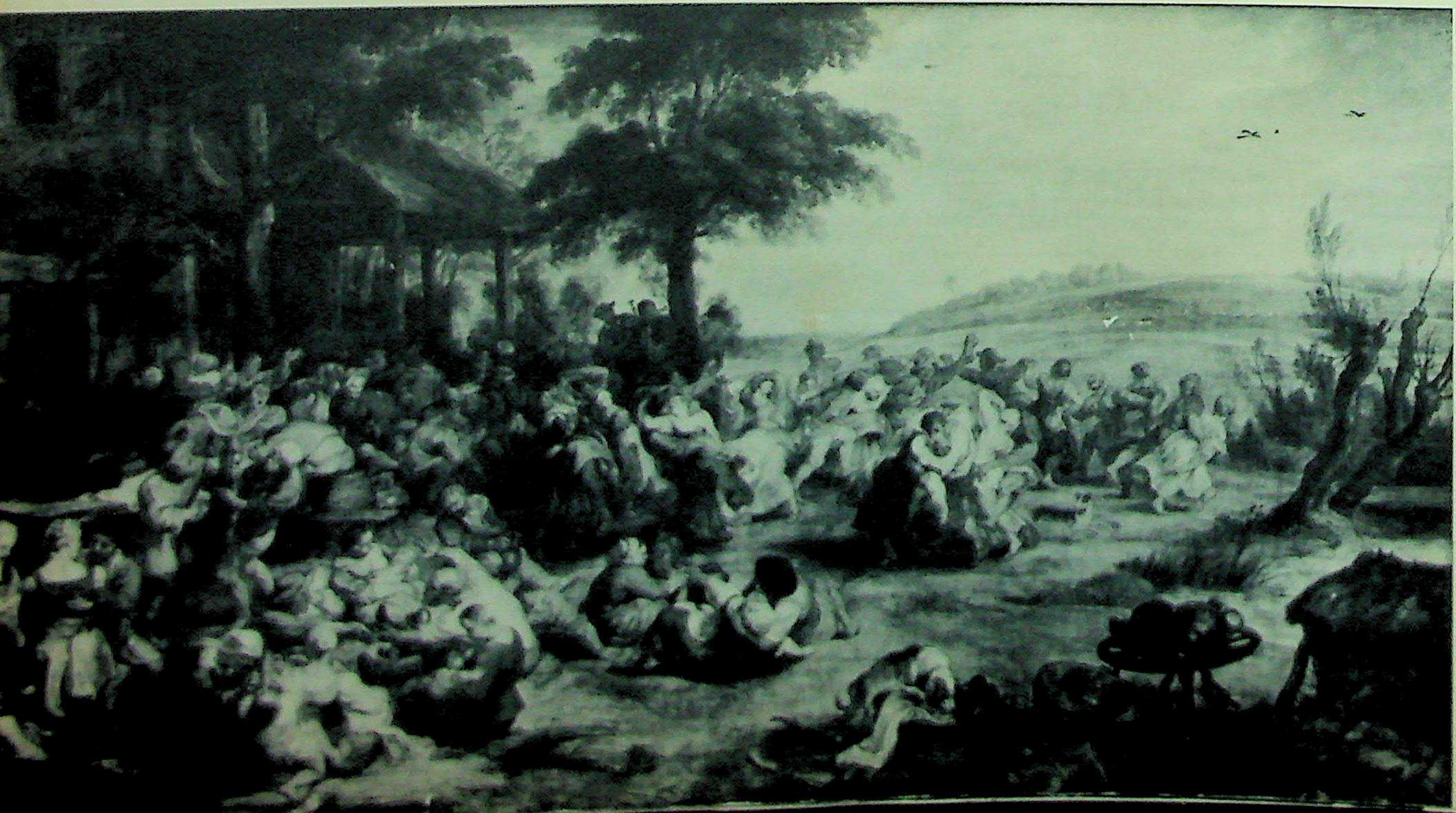
HELENE FOURMENT
AND TWO OF HER CHILDREN
Oil on wood, 44½ x 32¼″

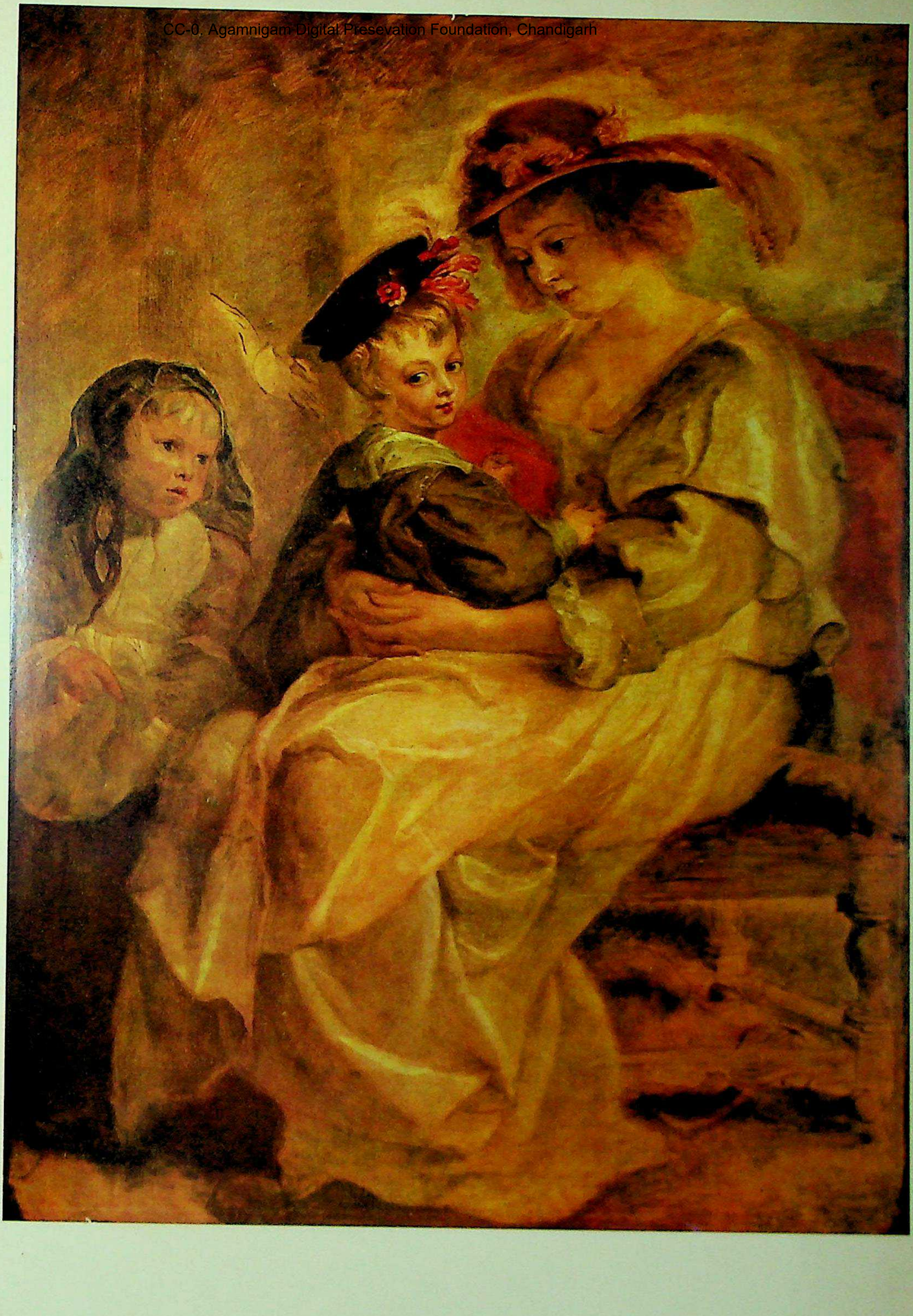
A universal genius—scholar, diplomat, collector as well as artist—Rubens has been described by Delacroix as "the Homer of Painting." Trained in Flanders and Italy, he was appointed painter to the Archduke Albert and the Archduchess Isabella in 1609. He began to free himself from his dependence on Italian masters, affirming his own lyrical and Baroque style. Overwhelmed with commissions he employed many apprentices—Van Dyck (page 35) was one of his collaborators—but the conception of the pictures is always Rubens' own.

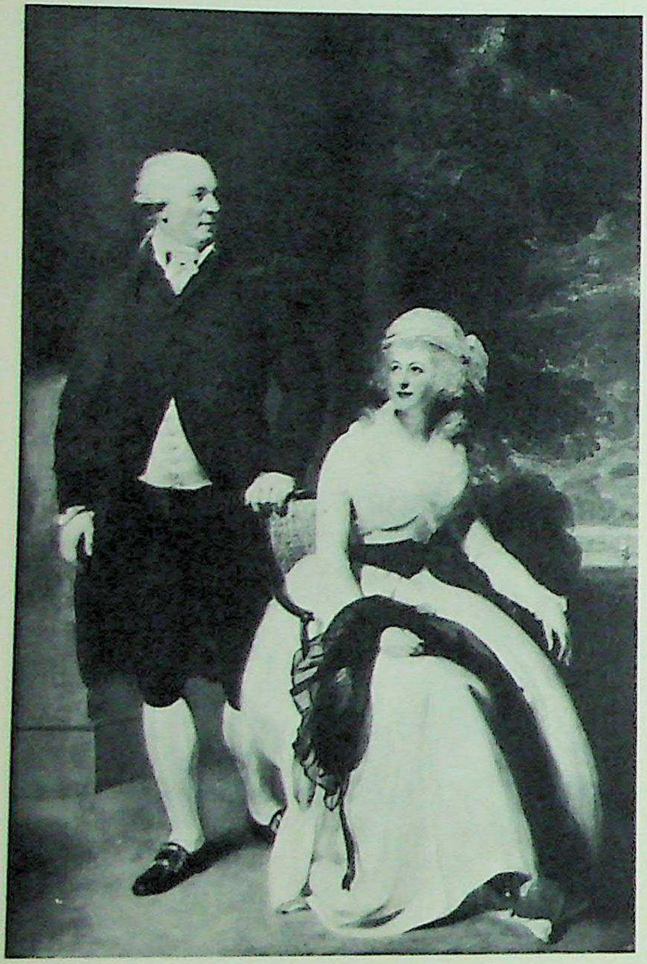
This portrait of Rubens' second wife, whom he married in 1630, and two of the five children she was to bear him, has a double interest. As one of Rubens' rare, unfinished paintings it gives us a special insight into his method of working: we see how on a uniform light brown background he indicates surely and immediately the principal values, adding a touch of red for the drapery and the flowers and marking with touches of lighter tones the young, radiant flesh. The painting is also a document of the painter's happiness, sensual and tender, informed with passion for his young wife and their two rosy children.

RUBENS *Flemish, 1577-1640*
COUNTRY FAIR
Oil on wood. 58⅝ x 102¾″

Twelve sketches in the British Museum show how carefully Rubens planned this Country Fair, *painted in the last period of his life. It presents a traditionally Flemish scene of peasant joy and drunkenness, and Rubens carries the recording of the occasion to the point of lyricism, a celebration of the elemental forces of life.*







colorplate 11 →

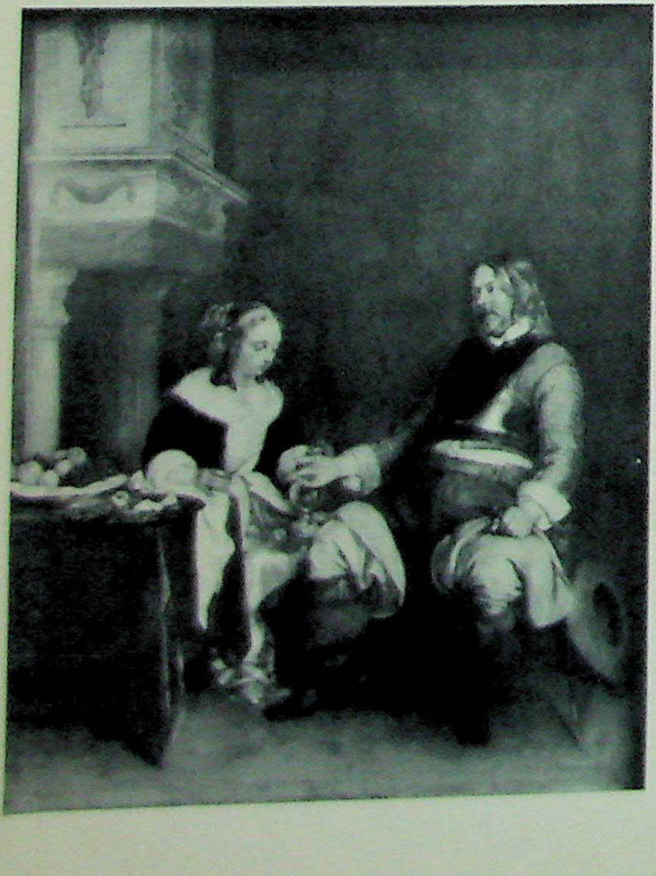
VAN DYCK

Flemish, 1599-1641

PORTRAIT OF CHARLES I OF ENGLAND
Oil on canvas, 107⅛ x 83½"

At the age of only twenty, when he became Rubens' chief collaborator, Van Dyck was already a celebrity. His early work displays the two qualities which made him so admirable a portrait painter: the precise individualization of his subjects and the pictorial harmony of the elements of his compositions. A visit to Italy enriched his style; from the Venetians, especially Titian and Tintoretto, he learned to employ rare and exquisite colors.

In 1632 King Charles I invited him to England, where he remained as court painter in an atmosphere of luxury. After three years he painted this portrait, probably the summit of his art. His dazzling technique has captured the majesty, dignity, and authority of his subject, expressed in the attitude of the head, the firm gesture of the hand on the cane. At the same time he conveys the individuality, the inborn elegance, and subtle grace which made Charles the paragon of dandies. Van Dyck's genius was the inspiration of the great English portrait school of the eighteenth century.

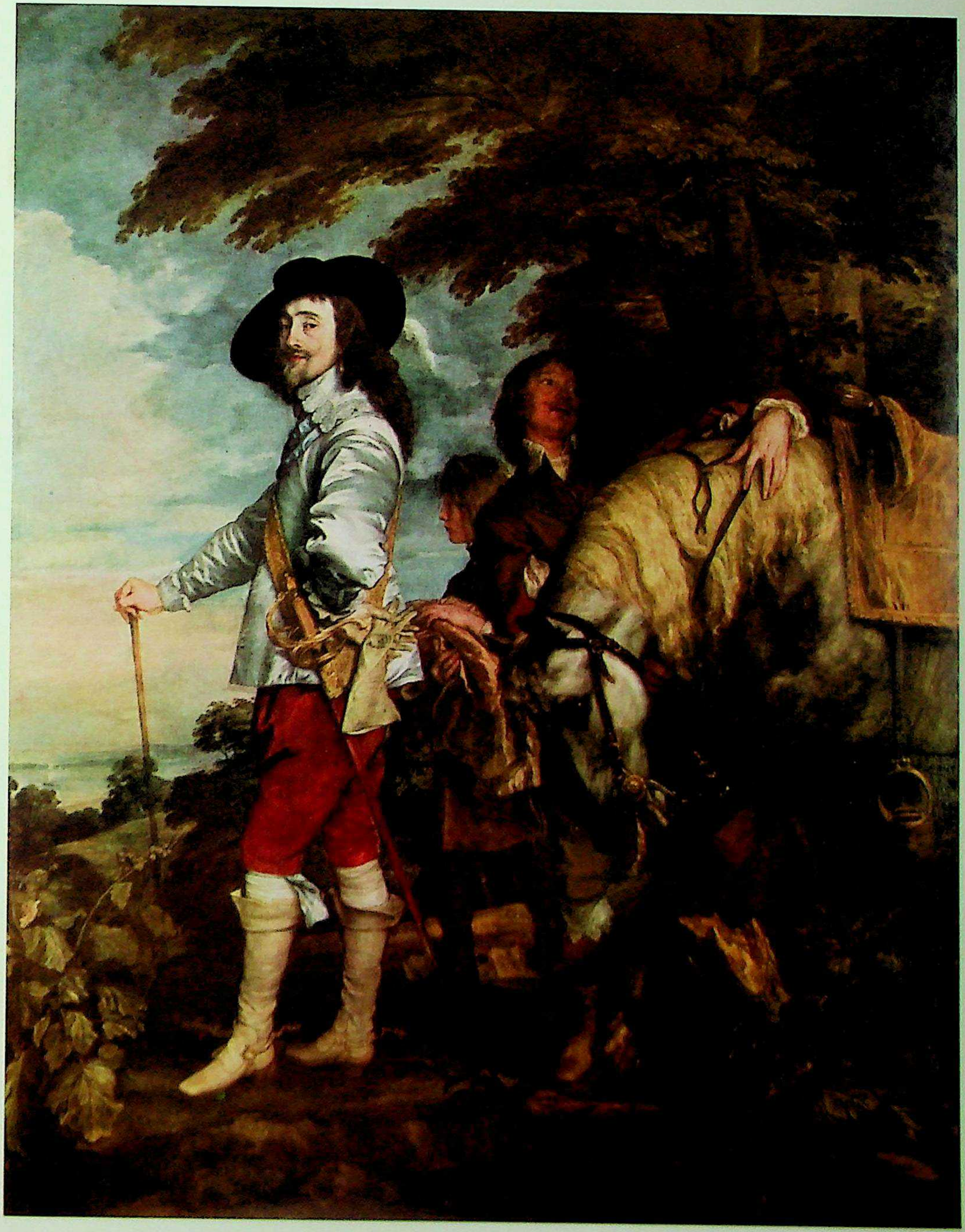


LAWRENCE *British, 1769-1830*
JOHN JULIUS ANGERSTEIN AND HIS WIFE
Oil on canvas. 100 x 62½"

In this early work the subjects are of the middle class—Angerstein was a wealthy merchant and the painter's early patron; Lawrence has given them a natural grace by which this painting rivals the elegance of Gainsborough's paintings of the aristocracy.

TER BORCH *Dutch, 1617-1681*
THE GALLANT
Oil on canvas. 26¾ x 21⅝"

Ter Borch shows the growing refinement of Dutch art. Only the heavily emphasized detail of the offer of money relates this painting to earlier Dutch genre art; we are struck instead by the somber and silent room, the luxurious chimney piece, and the discreet, elegant lady.



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colorplate 12 →

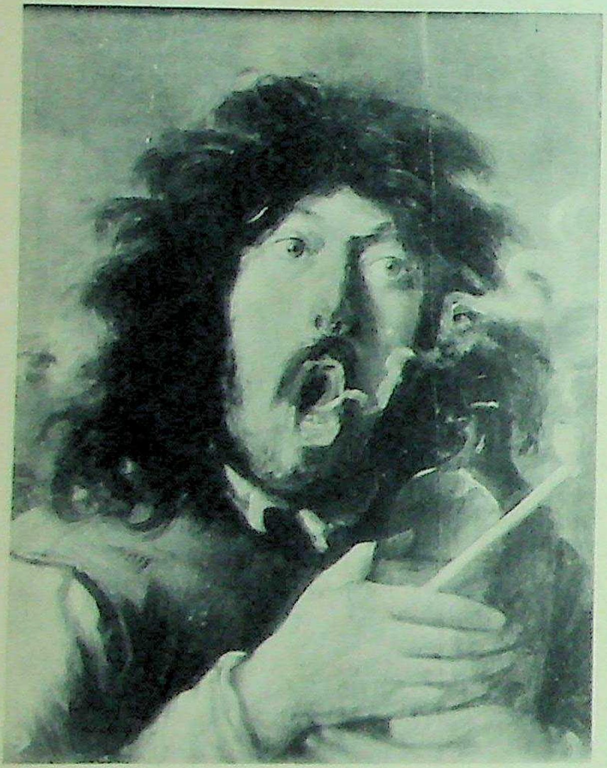
HALS

Dutch, 1580-1666

LA BOHEMIENNE
Oil on wood, 22⅞ x 20½"

With Hals, painting lost its ancient immobility and seized upon the fleeting and the elusive. His *Bohémienne,* in its color and brilliance, its opposition of red and white, reveals the influence of Caravaggio on his early career. The Caravaggian influence established the model for these half-length paintings of wild and vagabond types. Hals, however, transformed this model through the rapid strokes of his unerring brushwork; entirely original is his feeling for vivid expression captured in the sidelong glance of the eyes and the mouth twisted with laughter.

Probably because of religious persecution, Hals's family moved from Flanders to Haarlem where the artist lived, studied, and worked. But we are reminded of his Flemish origins by the sparkling intensity of life and joy which always, despite hardship, debt, and physical failings, mark the execution of his paintings.

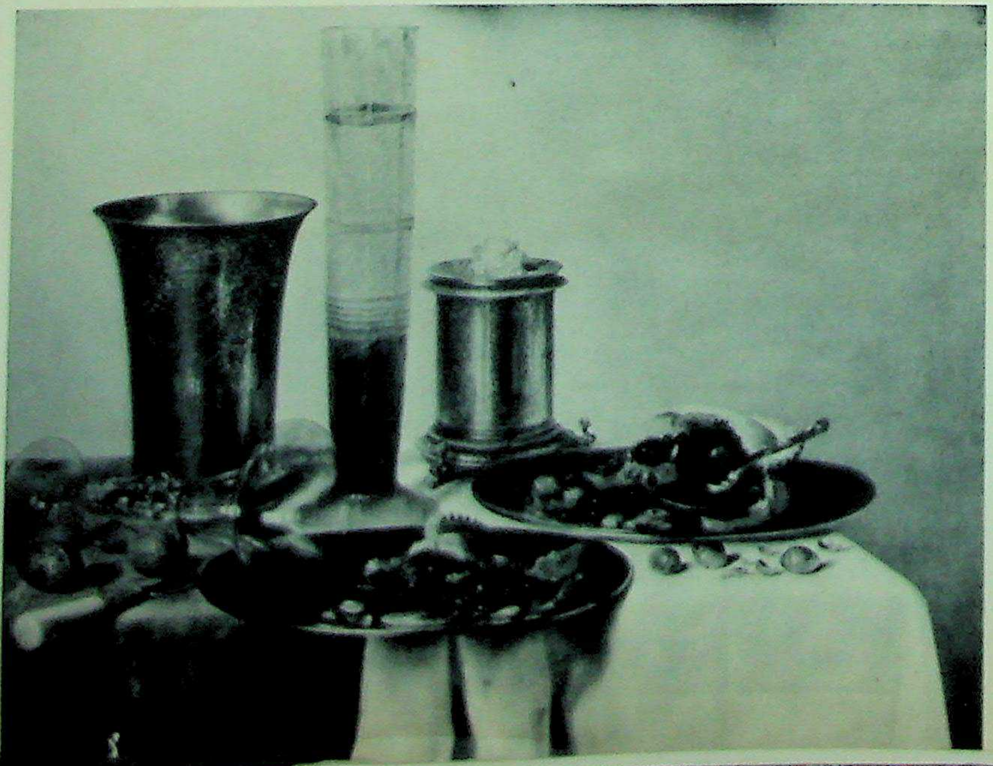


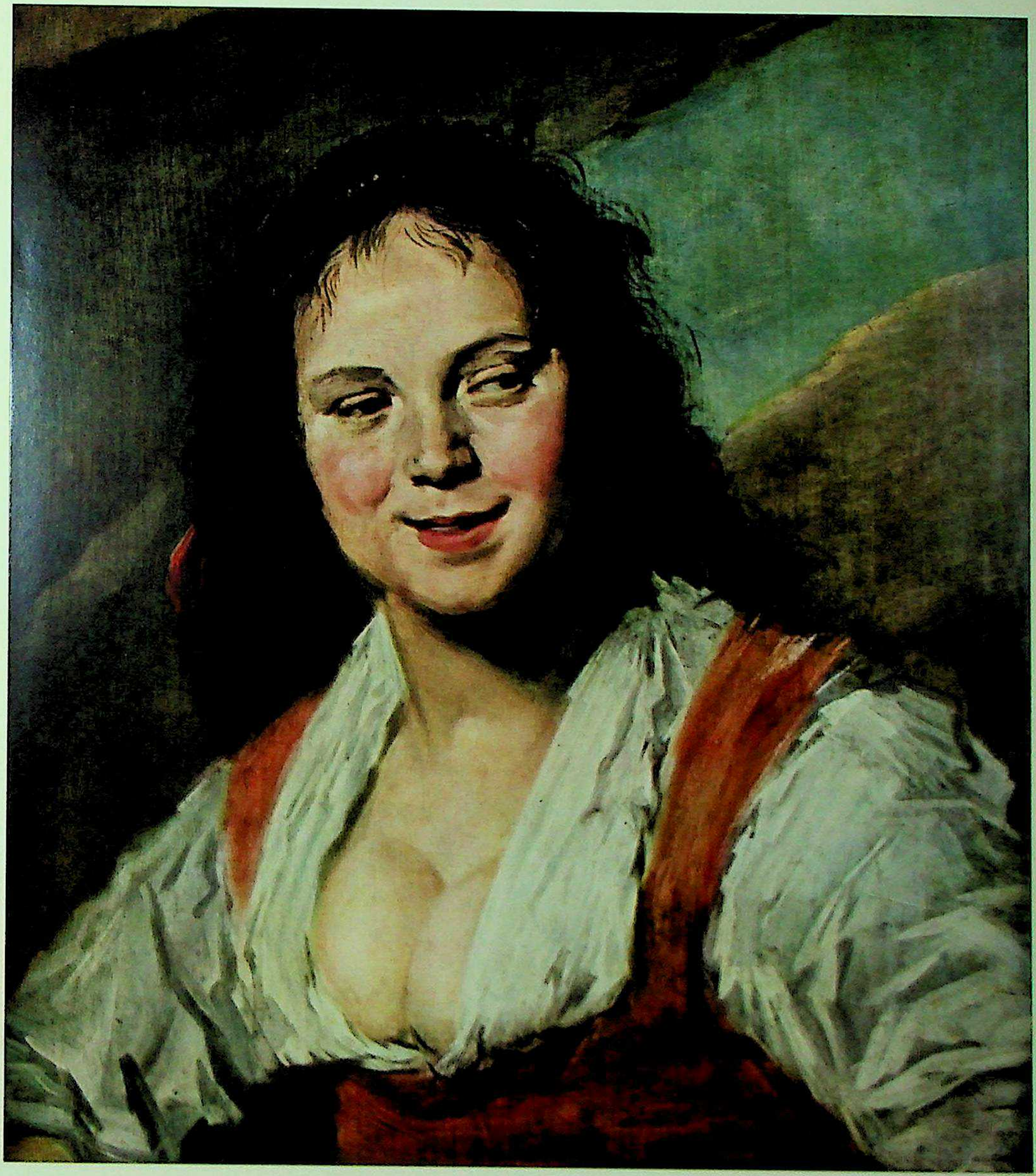
BROUWER *Flemish, 1605?-1638?*
THE SMOKER
Oil on wood. 16⅜ x 12¾"

Though born in Flanders, Brouwer was trained as an artist in Holland. The influence of Frans Hals, at whose studio he worked, is obvious in the vigorous technique and crackling brush strokes of this painting. Brouwer has caught the grimace of this tobacco and gin addict with the precision of a caricaturist.

HEDA *Dutch, 1593?-1682?*
STILL LIFE
Oil on wood. 17⅜ x 22"

Heda is known primarily as a still-life painter, contributing to this genre a personal and very pure perception of volume and structure and a technique of great subtlety.





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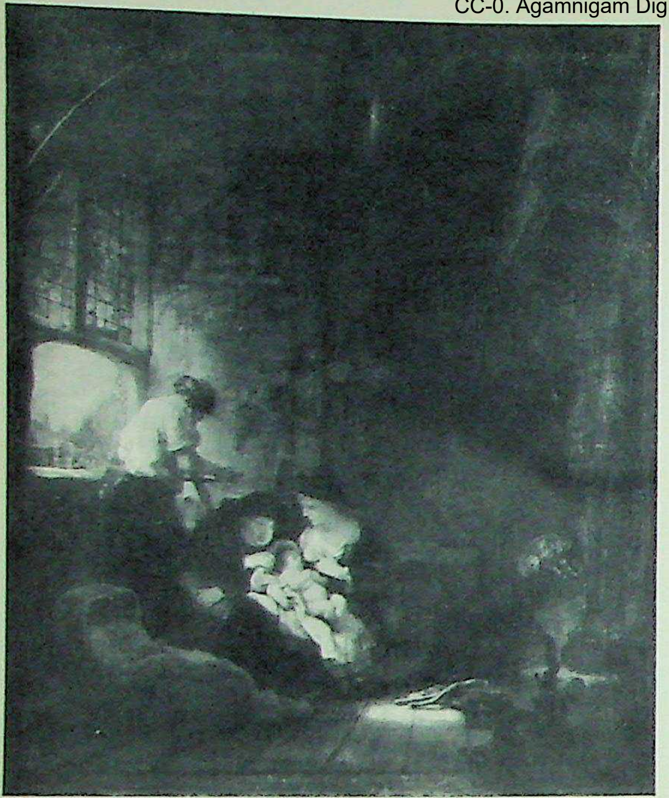
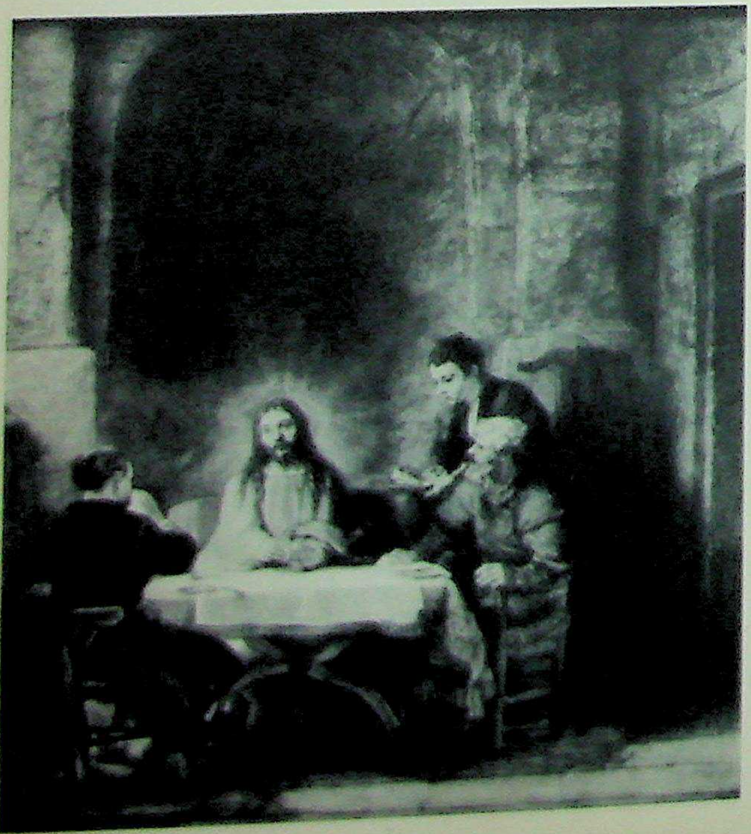


REMBRANDT *Dutch, 1606-1669*
THE HOLY FAMILY
Oil on wood. 16⅛ x 13⅜″

Rembrandt painted this subject several times. Here he transfers the Biblical scene to his own time, to the room of a poor carpenter who works contentedly by an open window. It is a striking indication of the range of Rembrandt's art that he created this intimate little scene at the same time that he was working on the monumental Night Watch.

REMBRANDT *Dutch, 1606-1669*
CHRIST AT EMMAUS
Oil on wood. 27 x 26″

Employing the most subdued means and the humblest of figures, Rembrandt here expresses the drama of the moment when Christ's identity is revealed to His companions at Emmaus.



colorplate 13 ⟶

REMBRANDT

Dutch, 1606-1669

THE ANGEL DEPARTING FROM THE FAMILY OF TOBIAS

Oil on wood, 26¾ x 20½″

Rembrandt's painting brought him early renown and wealth. But after the death of his wife Saskia and their son Titus he withdrew more and more into himself as his powerful genius, perhaps the greatest in the history of art, matured. Foregoing the easy successes of his youth, he was to know hardship and financial ruin for the rest of his life. He was ostracized for living with his servant, the gentle Hendrickje Stoffels, who first joined his household about 1649. After her death Rembrandt passed the last six years of his life absorbed in his own magnificent visions which he put on canvas with a technique both daring and rich in mystery.

The painting opposite, an early work, is full of a sudden drama which Rembrandt was later to replace by more revealing inner illumination. The angel, his mission finished, reveals his identity and soars toward Heaven. The actions and poses admirably suggest the character of the other actors: old Tobit, cured of blindness, deep in prayer; the cowering dog; the wife's terror and lack of confidence; and the secure faith of the young couple who look up more in awe than in fear at the angel disappearing in the blinding light.

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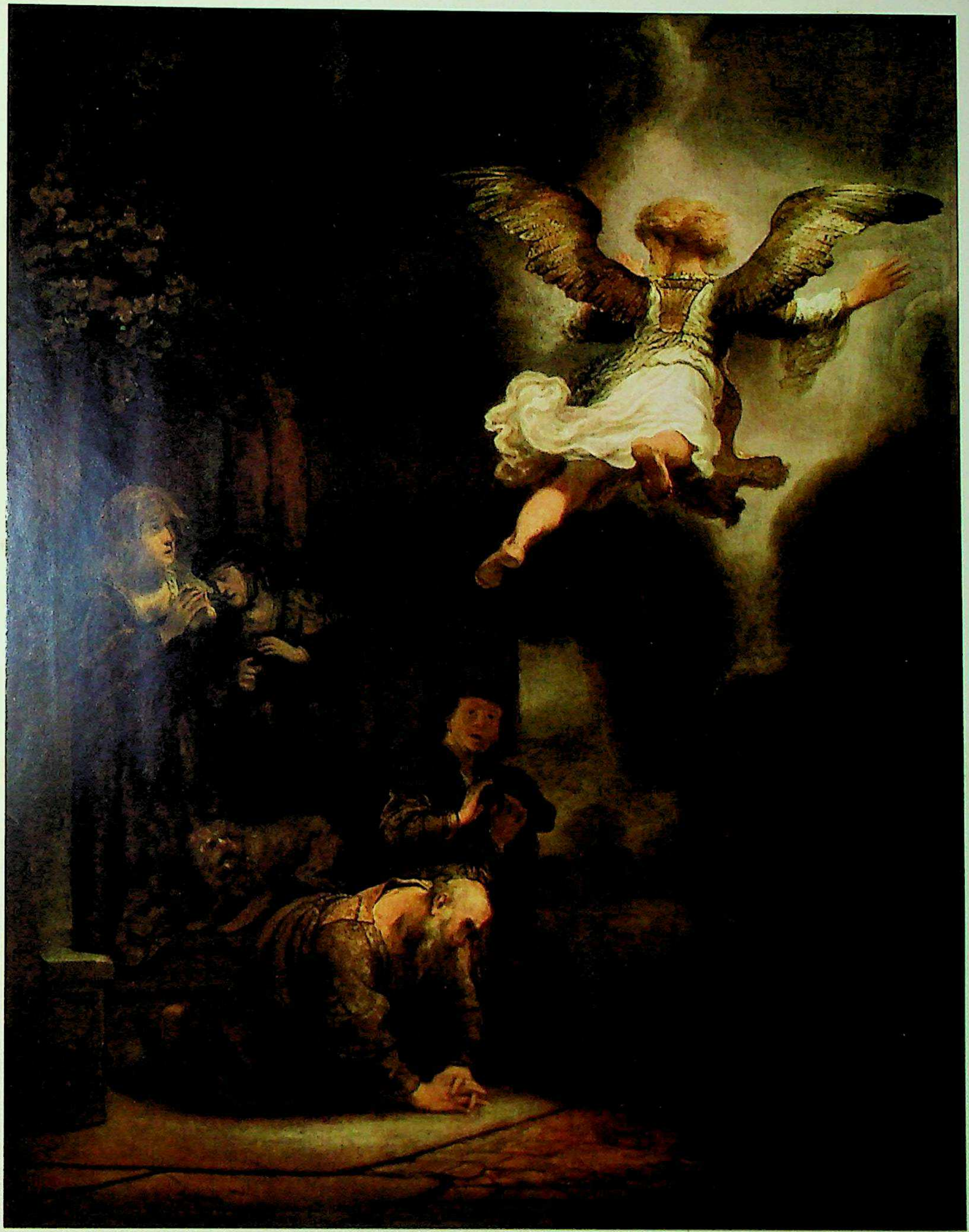

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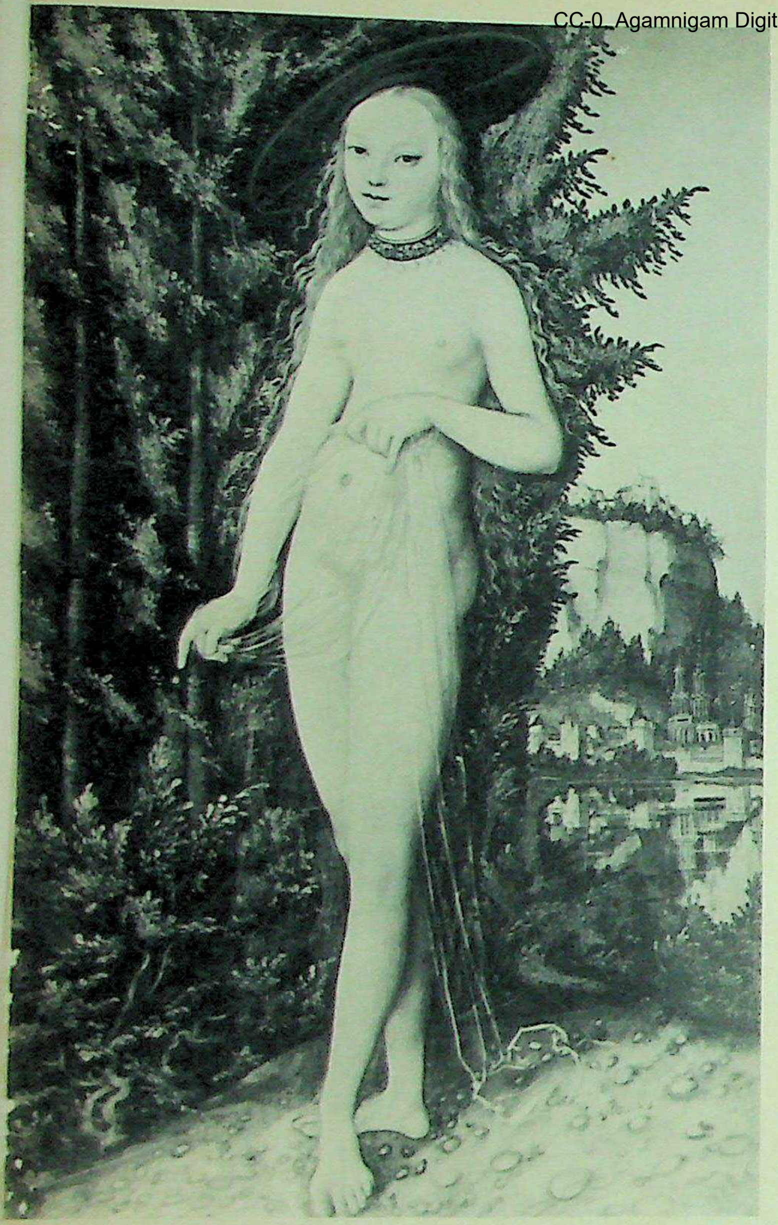


colorplate 14 ⟶

DURER

German, 1471-1528

SELF-PORTRAIT

Tempera and oil on parchment, 22¼ x 17½"

Possessed of breadth of vision, audacity of thought, and a passionate desire to broaden his understanding of his art, Dürer can be ranked with the great humanists. He was born in Nuremberg and studied there and later at Cologne at the studio of Martin Schongauer where he learned copperplate engraving. His two trips to Italy, which brought him under the influence of Mantegna and Bellini, helped to form his style. In addition to his work as painter and graphic artist, Dürer pursued scientific studies, and toward the end of his life he wrote three books—on perspective, on the construction and fortification of cities, and on proportion.

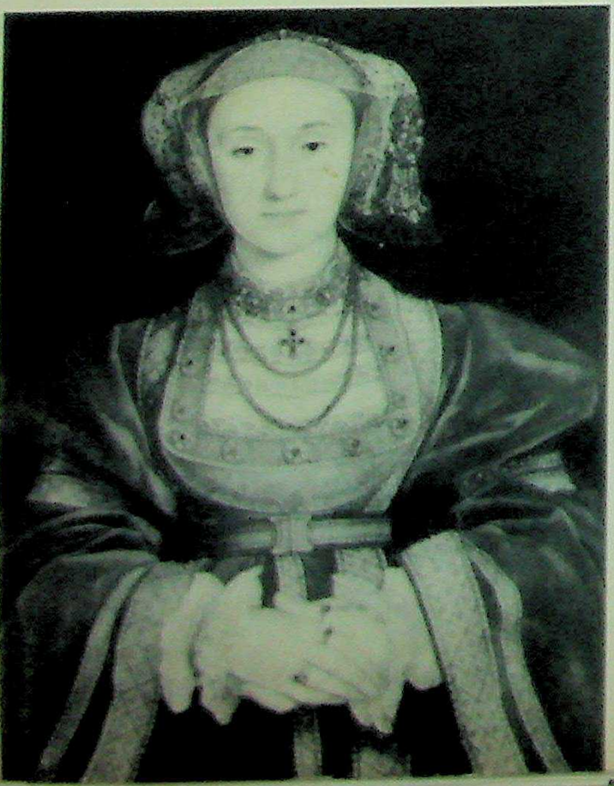
The present *Self-Portrait* is one of several from Dürer's hand. It is an admirable likeness, tormented and contorted in style, obsessed by the minutiae of realism, but entirely sweetened by the inner dream in the subject's eye. From the sprig of thistle, which in Germany symbolized marital fidelity, some historians have drawn the conclusion that Dürer intended this painting for his betrothed, whom he married in 1494.

CRANACH *German, 1472-1553*

VENUS IN A LANDSCAPE

Oil and tempera on wood. 13 x 10¼"

Cranach, a prolific painter with an important workshop, was the author of some of the freshest, most winning, and most light-hearted paintings of the German Renaissance. Here, Cranach gives Venus the dainty graces of the wife of a Saxon bourgeois.

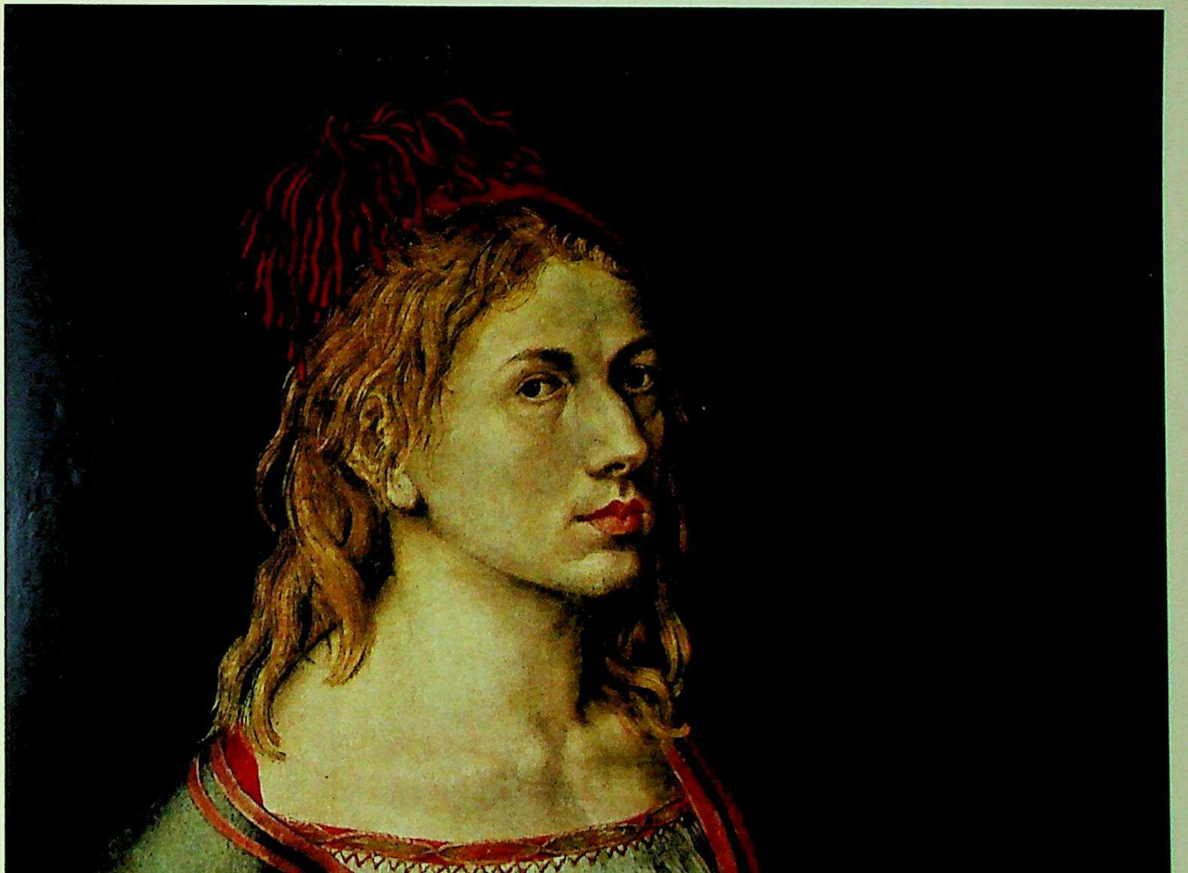


HOLBEIN *German, 1497-1543*

ANNE OF CLEVES

Tempera and oil on parchment. 25⅝ x 18⅞"

Holbein painted this portrait of Anne of Cleves for her husband-to-be, King Henry VIII of England. He has not flattered her vague, sullen, and expressionless features but has made them take second place to the jeweled details of the sumptuous robe and coiffure.



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colorplate 15 ⟶

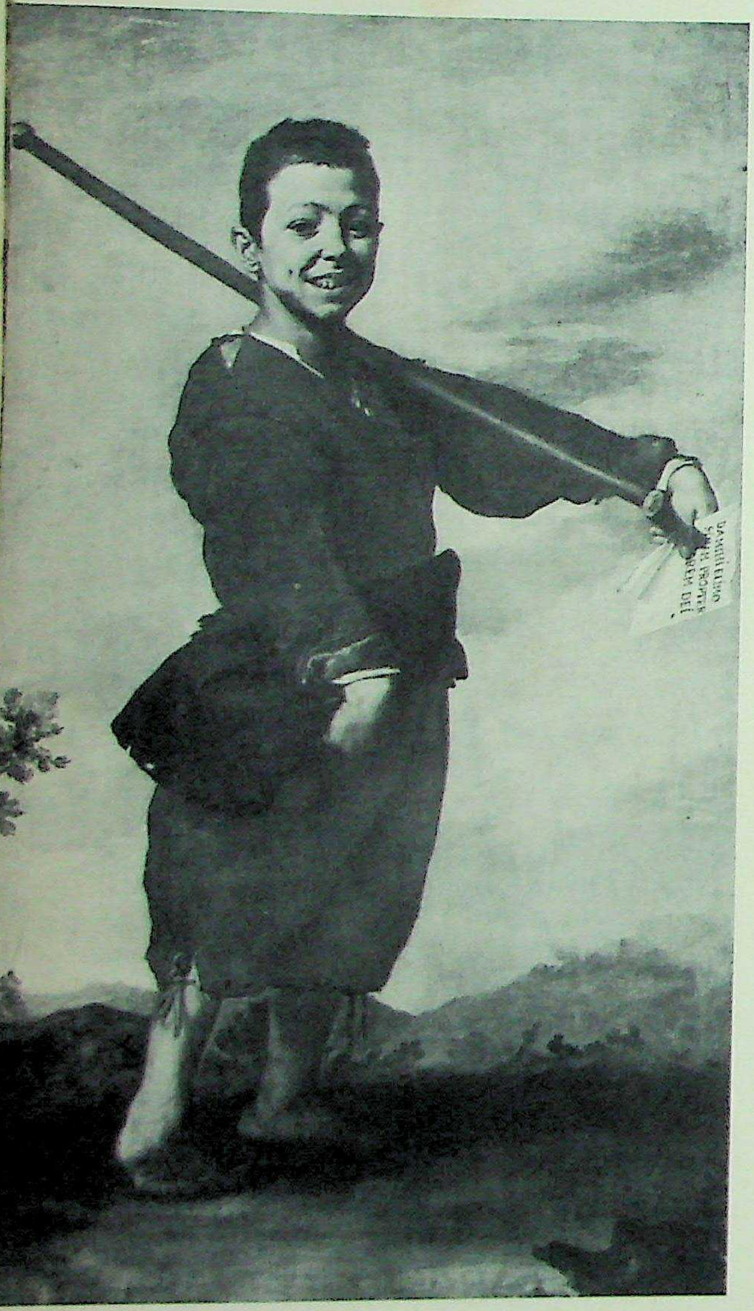
EL GRECO

Spanish, 1548-1614

SAINT LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE
Oil on canvas, 46 x 37⅜″

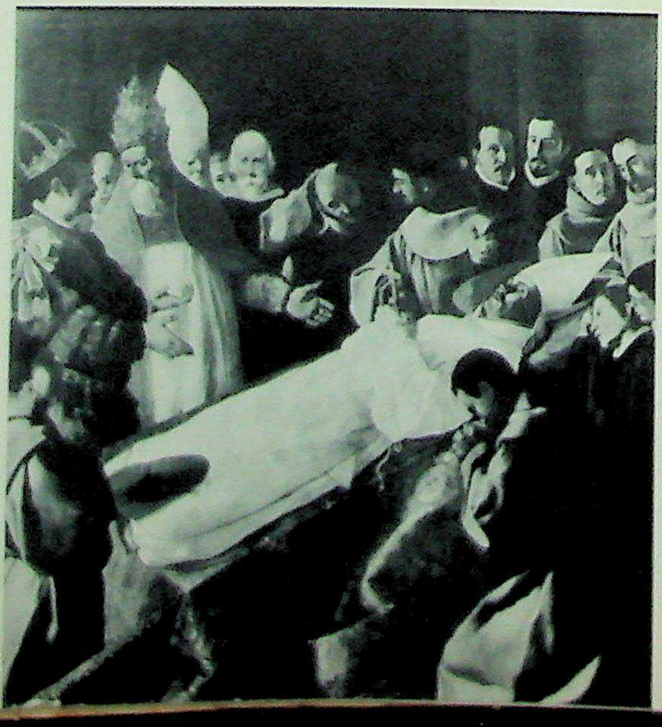
Born in Crete, El Greco never forgot his Byzantine Greek antecedents even though he studied in Venice and Rome and eventually settled in Spain. In Toledo he became the friend of the city's poets and scholars and found a spiritual climate suitable to his personality and needs. His productivity was remarkable; he painted religious subjects with an intense spirituality almost without parallel in the history of art, and he was a sculptor and architect as well.

Against the background of El Greco's other work the conception of the monarch-saint in this portrait seems especially curious: he is a thoughtful, rather awkward man with a good but not particularly saintly face. The quiet and sad dignity of this portrait derives much more from the king's humanness than from any overwhelming impression of his spirituality.



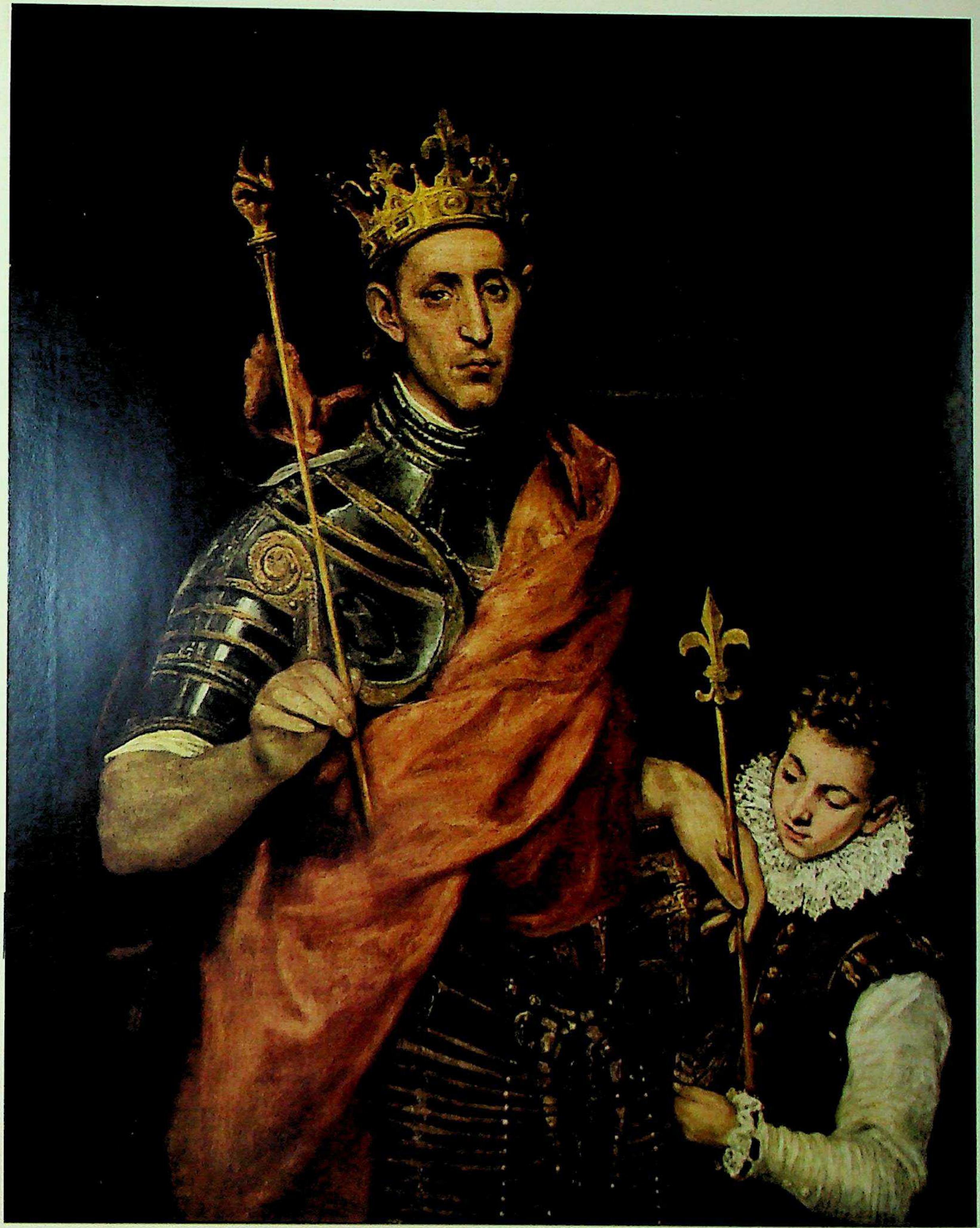
RIBERA *Spanish, 1588-1652*
THE CLUBFOOT
Oil on canvas, 64⅝ x 37″

A close follower of Caravaggio, Ribera painted portraits of street types in which extreme realism and the violent expression of ugliness are neither exaggerated nor caricatured. The strange and smiling cripple here holds an inscription in his left hand telling us that he is also dumb.



ZURBARAN *Spanish, 1598-1662*
THE FUNERAL OF SAINT BONAVENTURA
Oil on canvas, 98⅜ x 86⅝″

St. Bonaventura, who died in 1274, was a cardinal and General of the Franciscan order. Zurbaran has represented him, in this bold and harshly monumental composition, as surrounded by Franciscans whose sad meditation as they confront death contrasts with the worldly calm of Pope Gregory X and the Emperor Palaeologus V.



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colorplate 16 ⟶

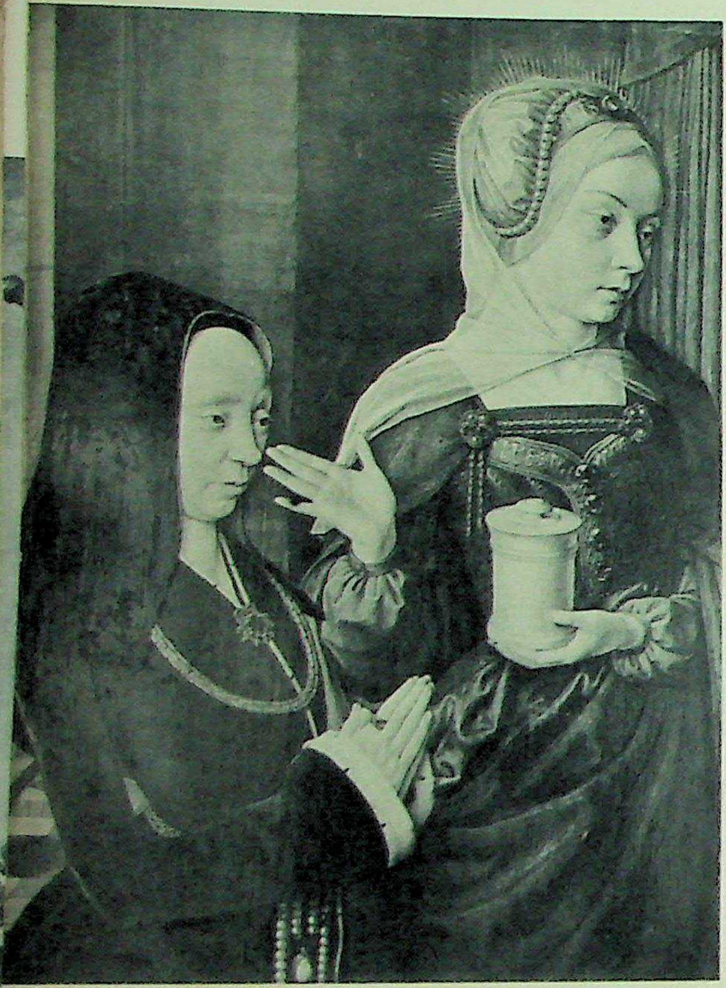
JEAN CLOUET

French, 1485?-1540?

PORTRAIT OF FRANCIS I

Tempera and oil on wood, 37¾ x 29⅛"

Gallant warrior, patron of the arts and sciences, one of the builders of the Louvre, founder of the Collège de France, friend and protector of Leonardo da Vinci, Francis was one of the brilliant figures of the Renaissance. Clouet has represented him here, not as the handsome man his admiring contemporaries described, but rather as a refined and elegant person with maliciously ironical and intelligent eyes. We see him with his hand on his sword, a king of great majesty, the first knight of his kingdom. Clouet has expressed the brilliance and majesty of his royal patron in the penetrating look, in the refinement of the head placed on a strong, massive neck, and in the elegance of the long, supple hands. The decorative effect of the sumptuous costume does not detract from the importance of the figure but instead gives it a greater nobility.



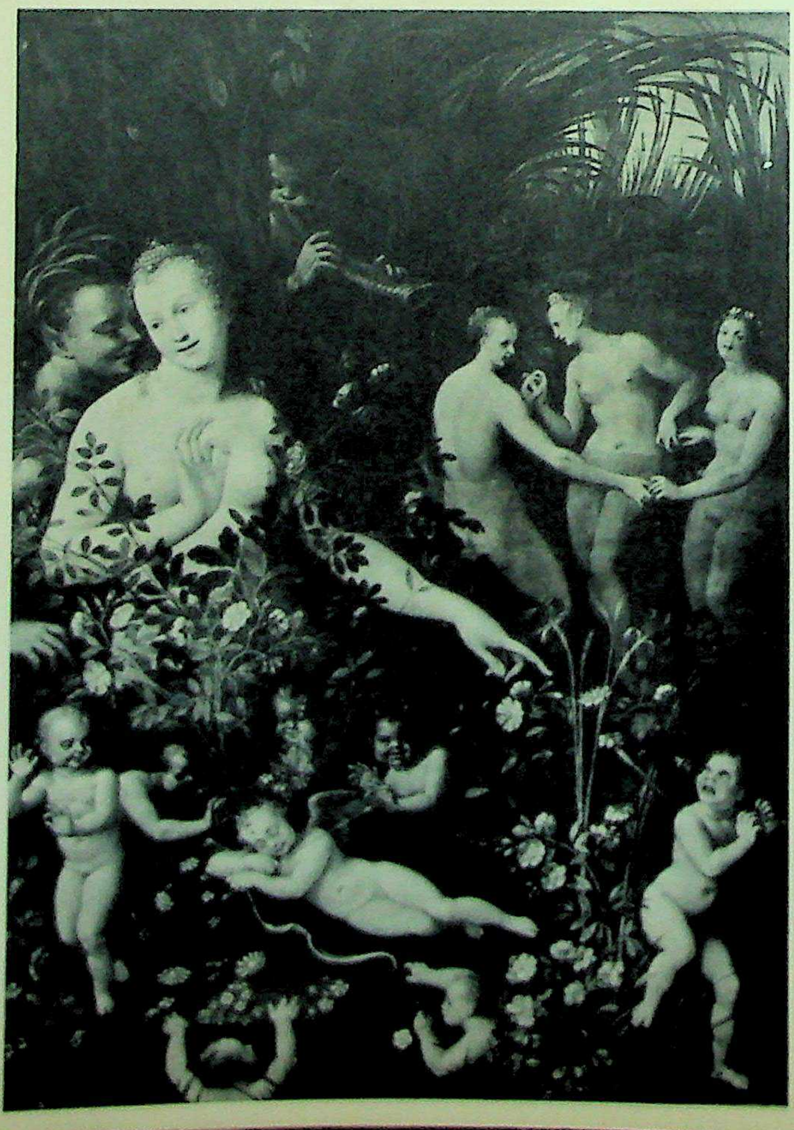
MASTER OF MOULINS

French, End of Fifteenth Century

SAINT MARY MAGDALEN AND A DONOR

Tempera and oil on wood. 20⅞ x 15¾"

The rounded and gentle modeling, the graceful attitude of St. Mary Magdalen, the devout bearing of the unidentified donor, and the careful attention given to the faces—these are typical of French art at the end of the fifteenth century. This painting was rediscovered in the great exhibition of French Primitives in 1904, when it was acquired by the Louvre.



UNKNOWN PAINTER

Fontainebleau school, Sixteenth Century

VENUS AND THE GODDESS OF THE WATERS

Oil on wood. 51⅝ x 38"

This painting is typical of the eclecticism, the preciousness, and decorative subtlety of the School of Fontainebleau, which was intended by Francis I to subject French art to Italian influences. The theme, probably inspired by an elaborate mythological poem, is difficult to identify with any certainty.

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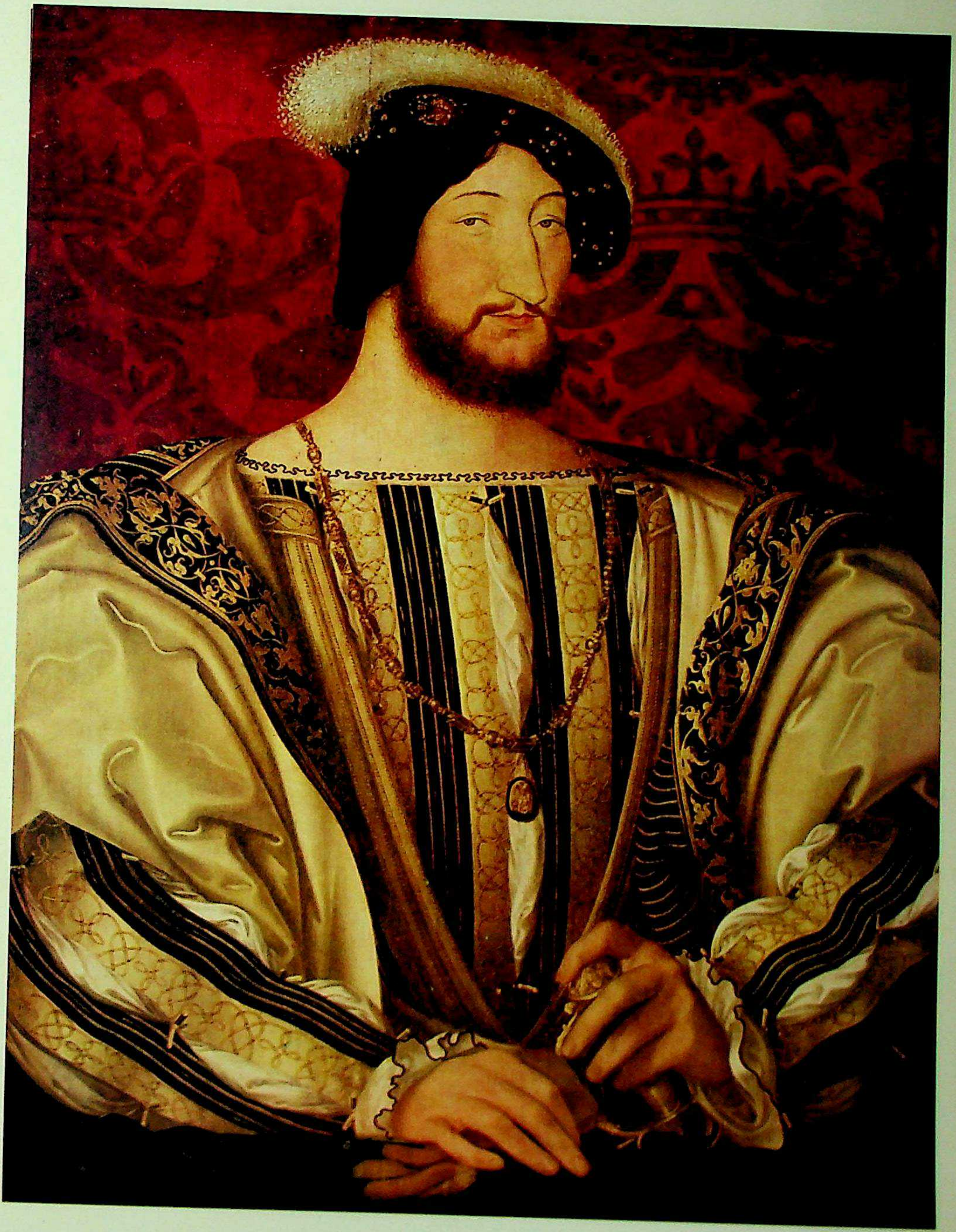

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colorplate 17 →

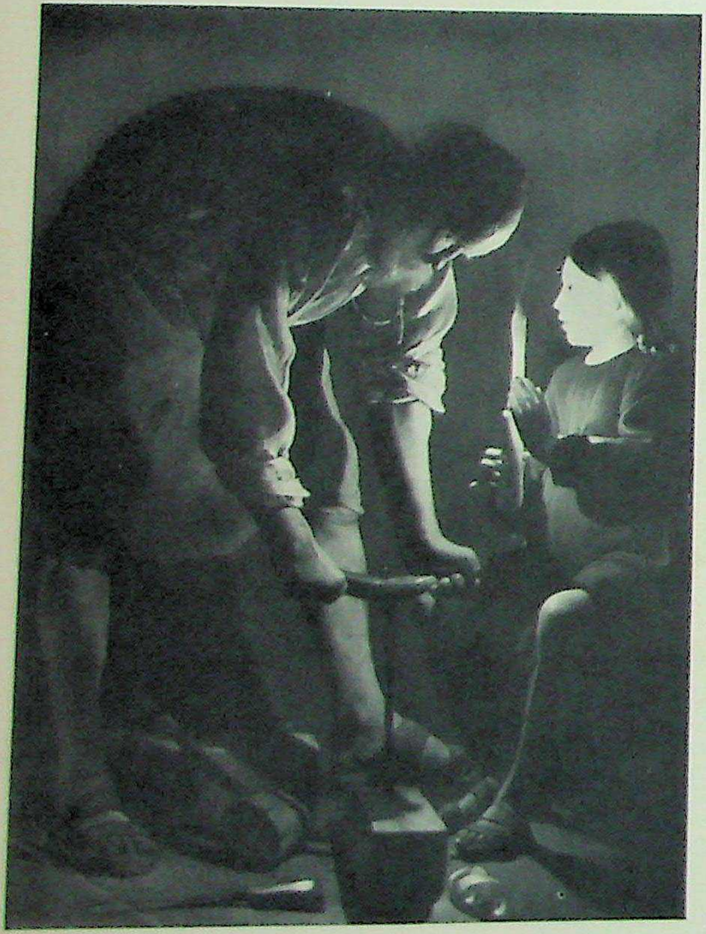
POUSSIN

French, 1594-1665

FUNERAL OF PHOCION
Oil on canvas, 46⅞ x 70½″

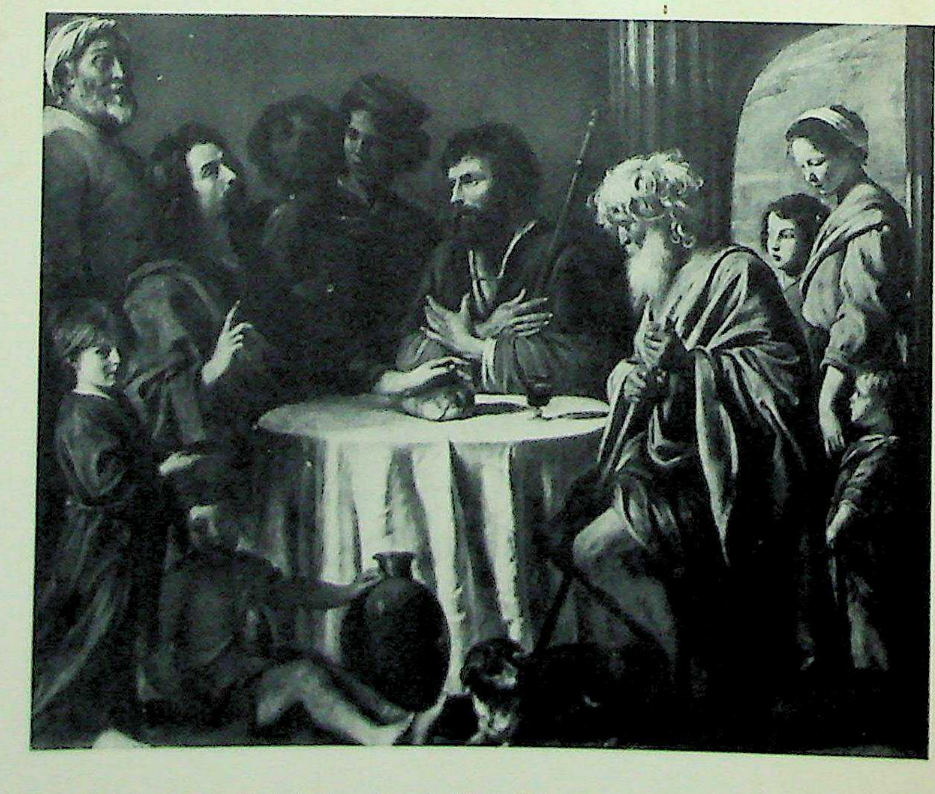
The highest qualities of French seventeenth-century art are epitomized in the work of Poussin who, paradoxically, spent the years of his mature artistry in Rome. Here, rather than in his native country, he must have sensed an atmosphere indispensable to his genius. His profoundly classical temperament was at ease among the monuments of antiquity; the pagan gods and classical legends were the preferred subjects of his paintings.

In the *Funeral of Phocion* he chose as his subject an incident from Plutarch: Phocion, an Athenian general who was poisoned by his political rivals and secretly buried. Even with so explicit a subject, however, Poussin is less interested in illustrating a narrative than in creating a formal and balanced composition which would convey his love and longing for the classical world. The figures are tiny in relation to the composition; here, as in other work of his full maturity, Poussin elevates landscape to the highest dignity of art.



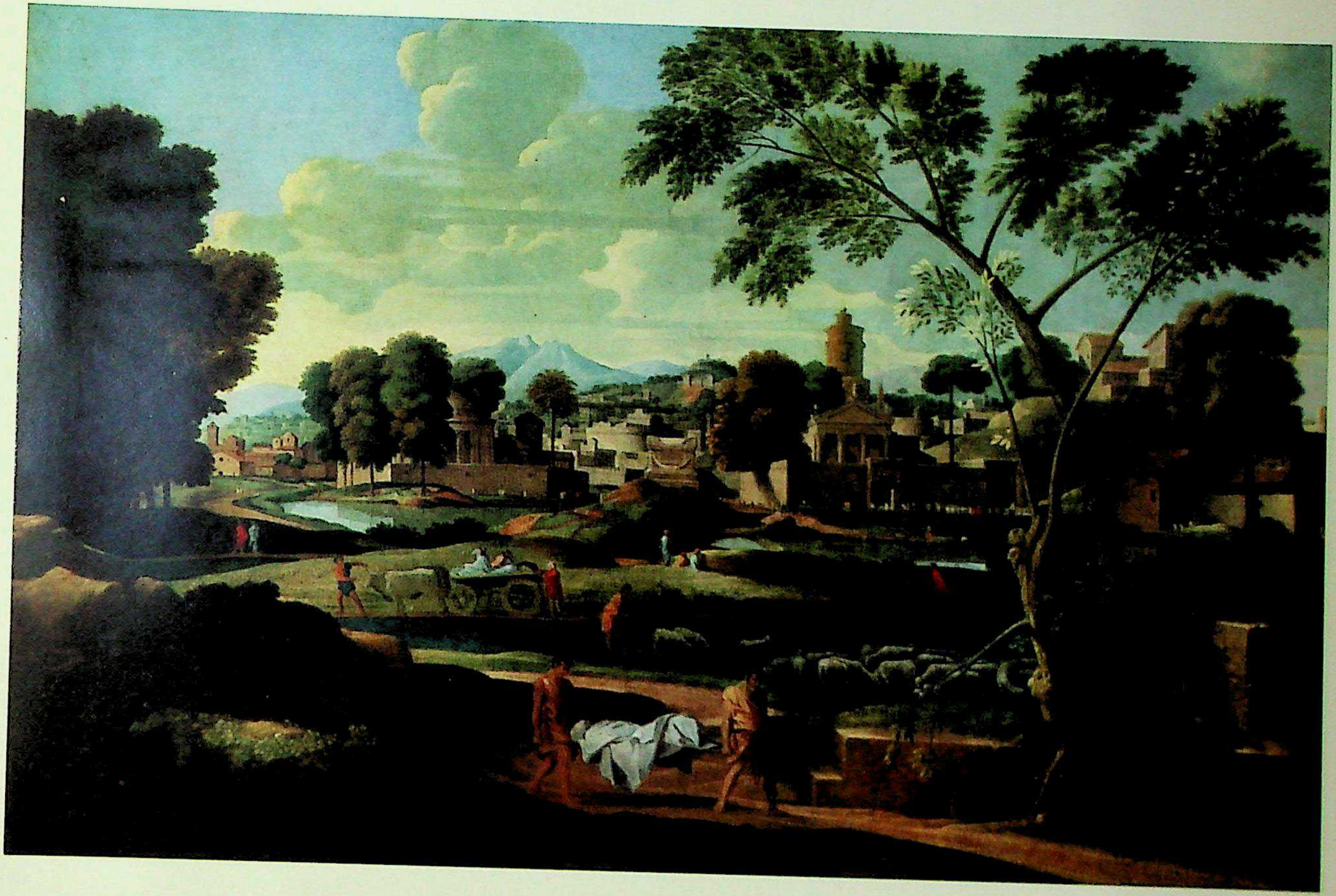
GEORGES DE LA TOUR
French, 1593-1652
SAINT JOSEPH AND THE CARPENTER
Oil on canvas. 53⅞ x 39¾″

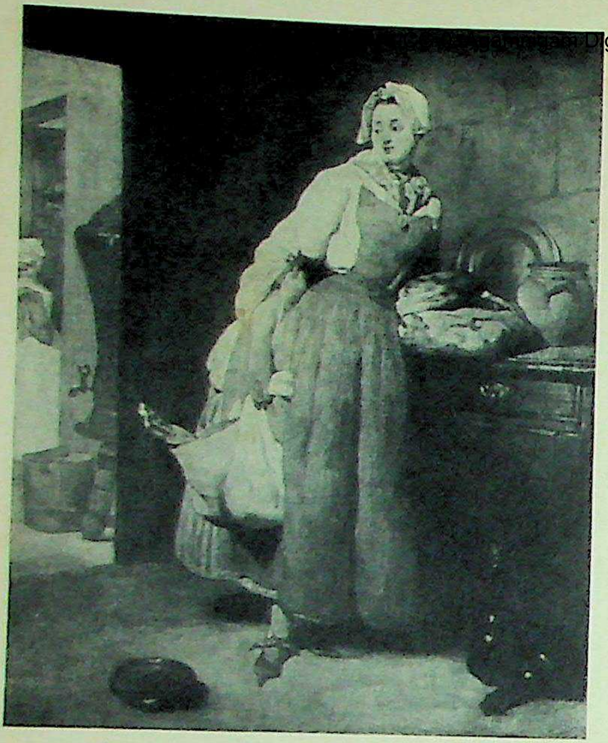
It is only recently that De La Tour, once a favorite of Louis XIII, has been restored to his just position as one of the great painters of the seventeenth century. This is one of the most beautiful and most moving of those night scenes which were considered De La Tour's glory in his own time.



LOUIS LE NAIN *French, 1593?-1648*
THE PILGRIMS AT EMMAUS
Oil on canvas. 29⅞ x 35⅞″

The composition and the arrangement of the serious, dignified figures are of the utmost simplicity. The absence of any striving for strong effect suggests the inner religious purity of this painter, who reveals the passion and beauty latent in the faces and gestures of humble people.





CHARDIN *French, 1699-1779*
BACK FROM THE MARKET
Oil on canvas. 18½ x 14¾″

Chardin has looked with great sympathy at the tired posture of the maid as she leans on the sideboard; under his brush the humble kitchen subjects acquire a massive importance. Like Le Nain and Corot, Chardin is one of the painters of poetic reality.

WATTEAU *French, 1684-1721*
EMBARKATION FOR CYTHERA
Oil on canvas. 50¾ x 76⅜″

It is a scene of fantasy and imagination, a poetic transformation of an eternal theme. About to set out for the Island of Love, the girl looks back tenderly on the land she is leaving.

colorplate 18 ⟶

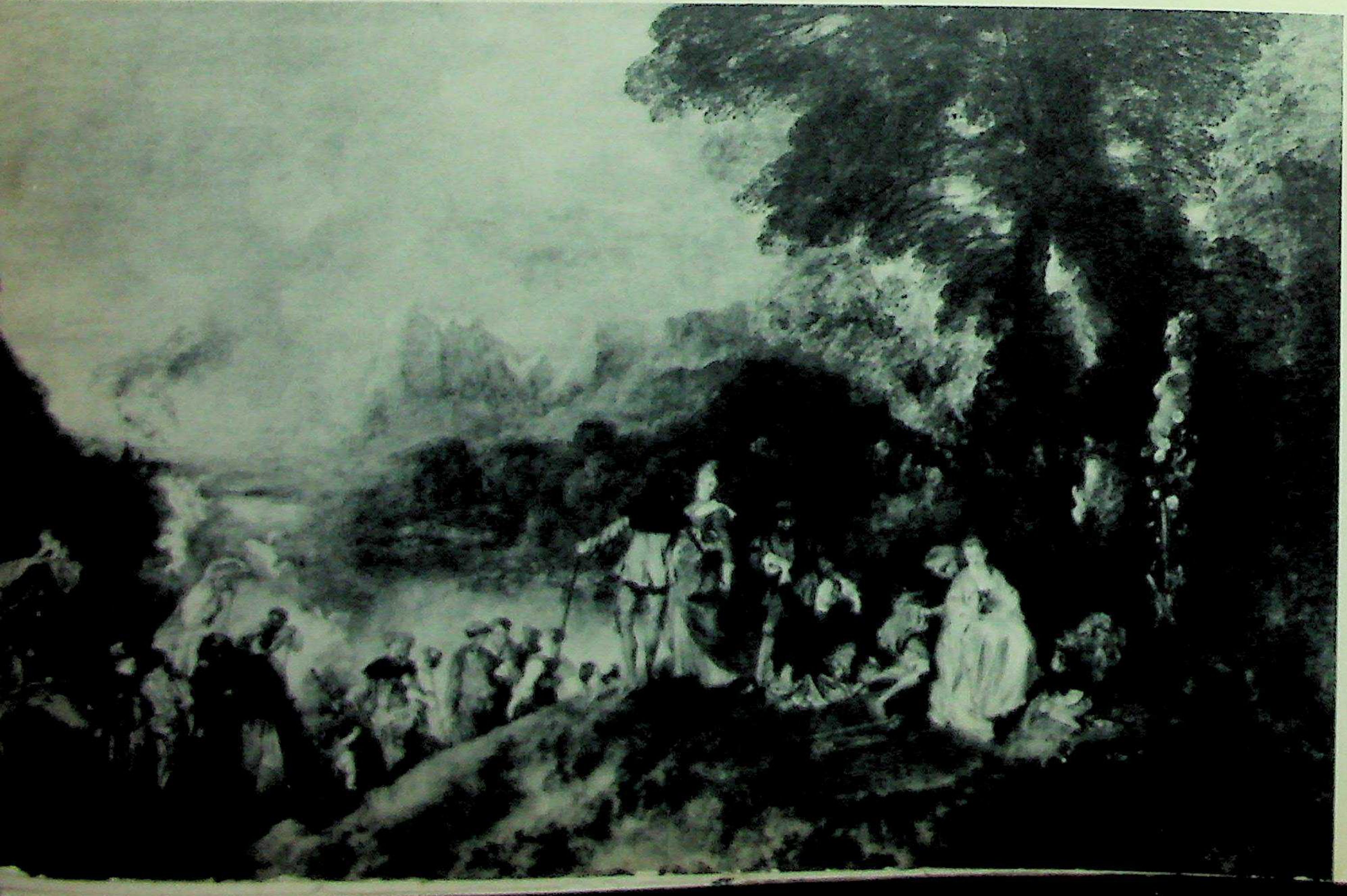
BOUCHER

French, 1703-1770

THE BATH OF DIANA
Oil on canvas, 22½ x 28¾″

This painting had an immediate success when it was exhibited in the Salon of 1742. Diana and one of her followers relax after the hunt; their dazzling and shimmering beauty is a harmony of pale gold playing against a background of blue. Such a painting satisfied the taste of a fastidious and sophisticated public sensitive to the most subtle relations of color, a public with a liking for pictures which could be hung against the light wood paneling of even the smallest room.

Official painter to King Louis XV, Boucher worked primarily in the service of Madame de Pompadour, who even took drawing lessons from him. He was an artist of unrivaled facility, exercising his versatile talent on all subjects, but above all on portraits of women. He is the most inventive and refined of the French decorators, and his work marks a high point of the Rococo style.



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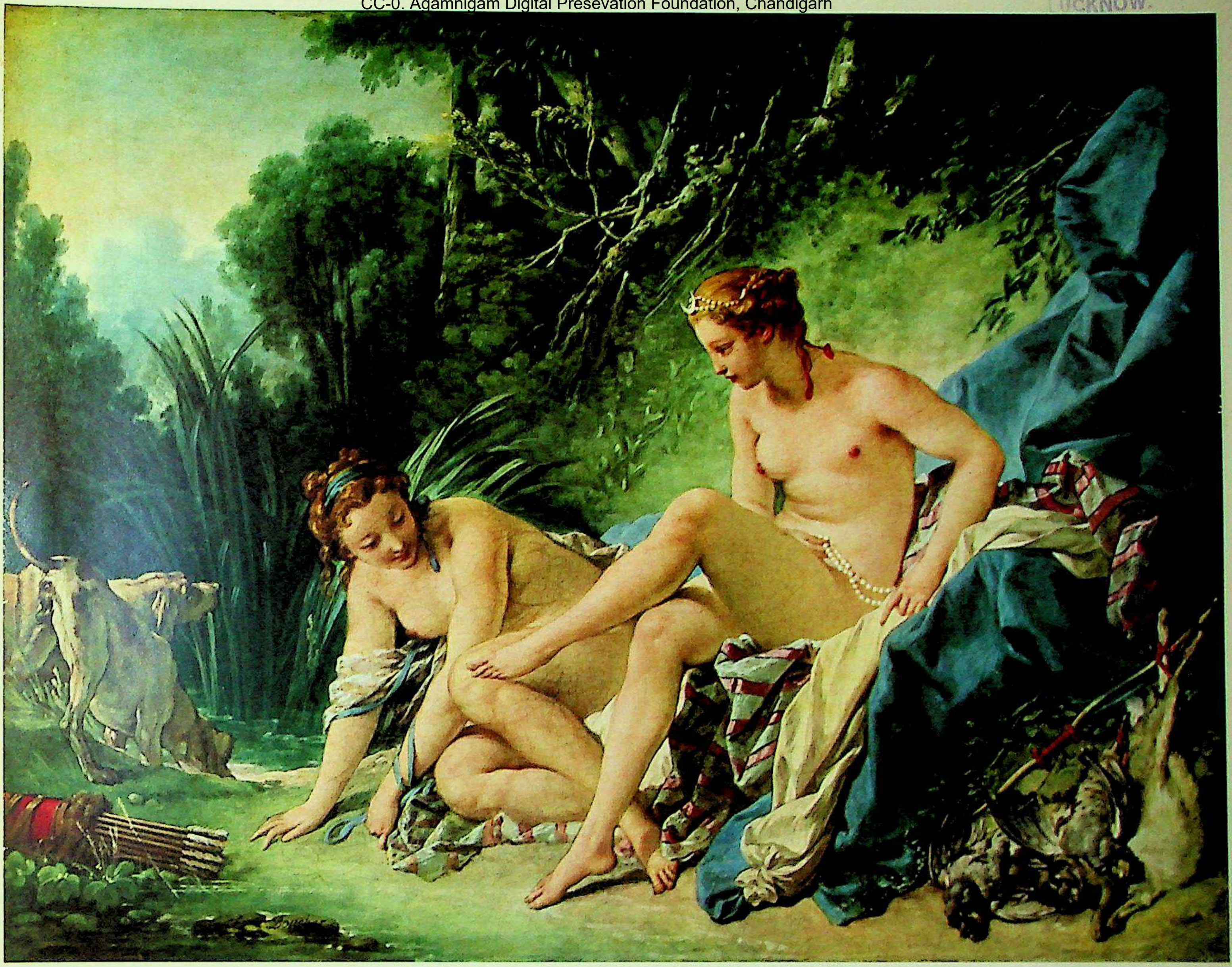
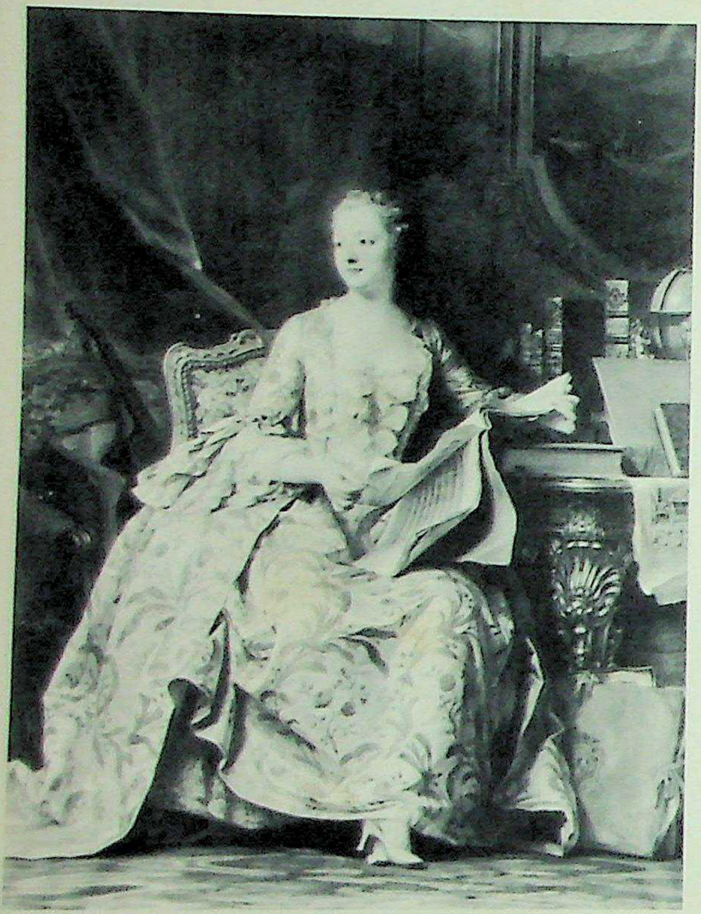




colorplate 19 →

FRAGONARD

French, 1732-1806

THE BATHERS
Oil on canvas, 25¼ x 31½"

Because of the freedom with which he handled his brush and chalk, and because of his remarkable virtuosity, Fragonard, pupil of both Chardin and Boucher, has been considered merely facile. He was, however, actually a far more complex artistic personality than Boucher and one of the great lyrical painters of his age, inspired by a powerful love for all manifestations of life.

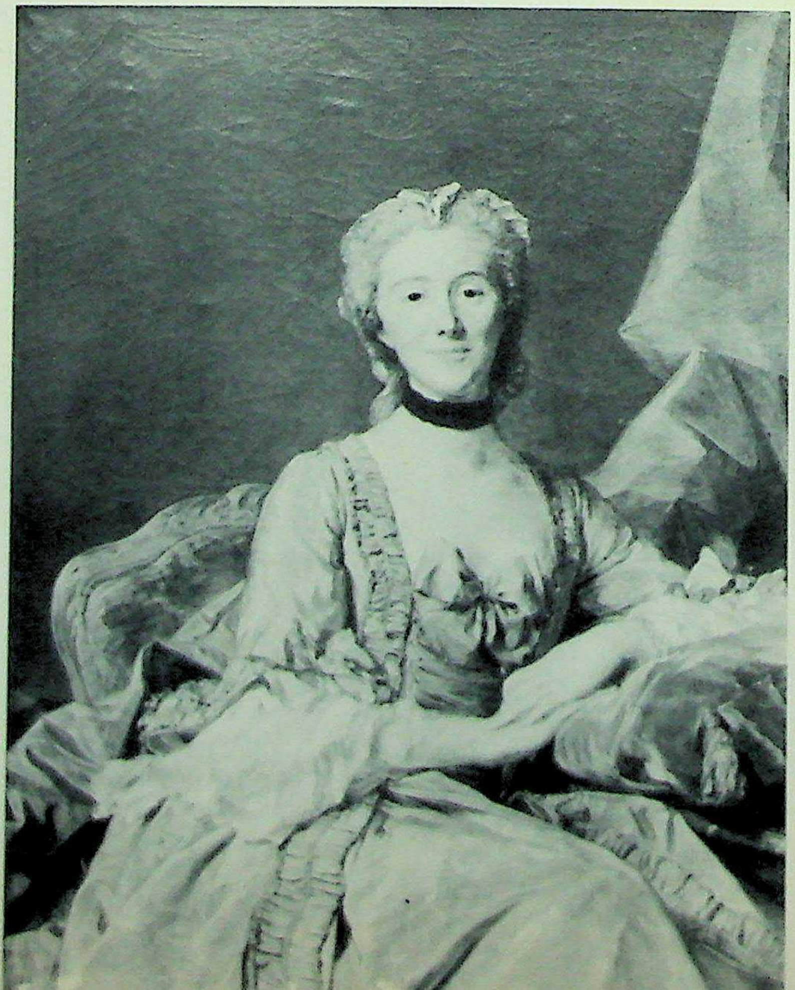
Fragonard handles the classic subject of bathers with characteristic verve and high spirits. The passion and energy of the brush, the quick nervous touches, betray a kind of drunkenness, a fever, of inspiration. He rejoices in the beauty of his models and in the light which transforms their skin and hair into a shimmering haze. Trees and plants become indeterminate shapes as light as clouds, and even the water is changed into foam. Fragonard here transcends that ideal of composure which his century cherished; he exults in that pantheistic lyricism he shares with Rubens and Renoir.

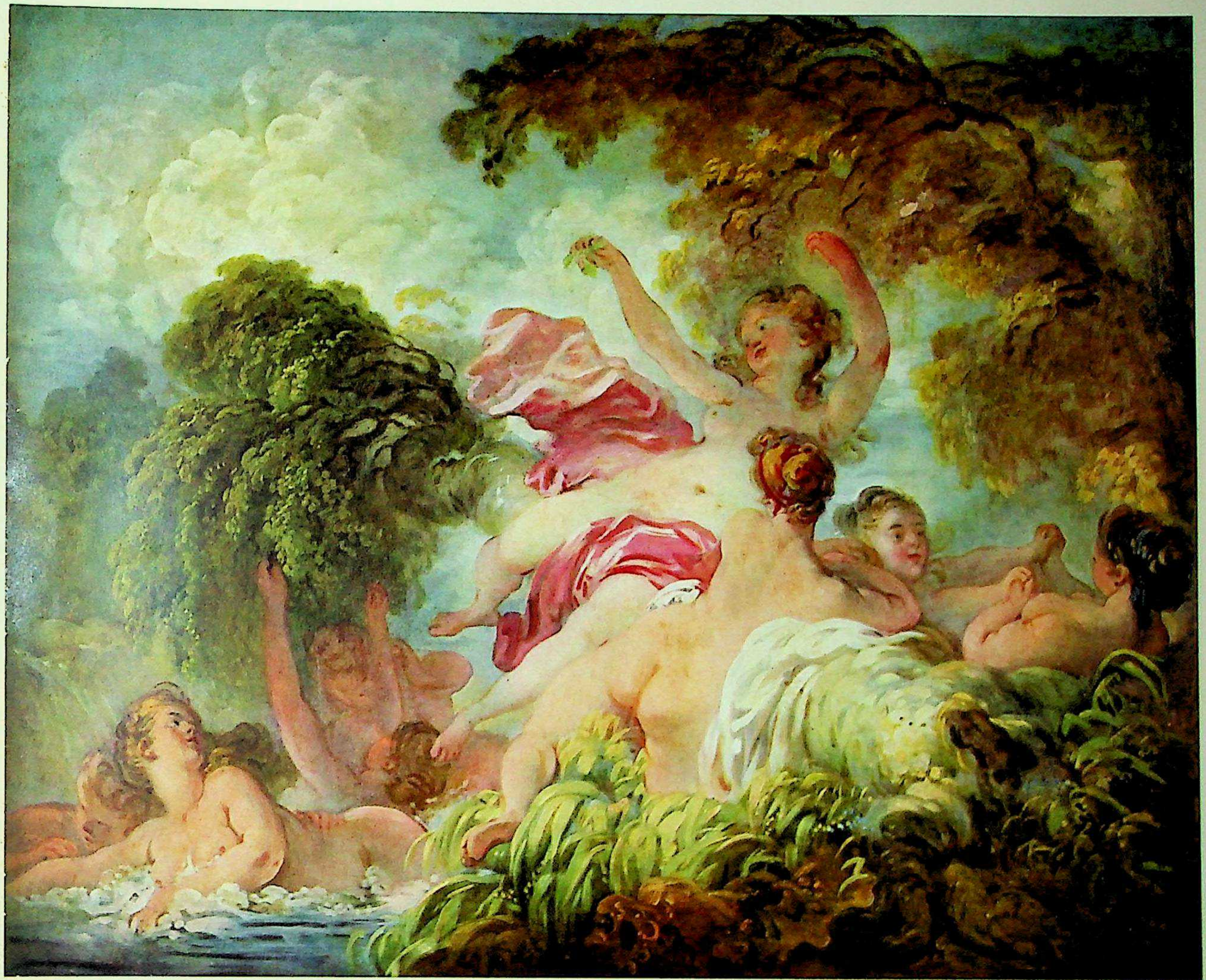
QUENTIN DE LA TOUR
French, 1704-1788
PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR
Pastel on paper. 68⅝ x 50⅜"

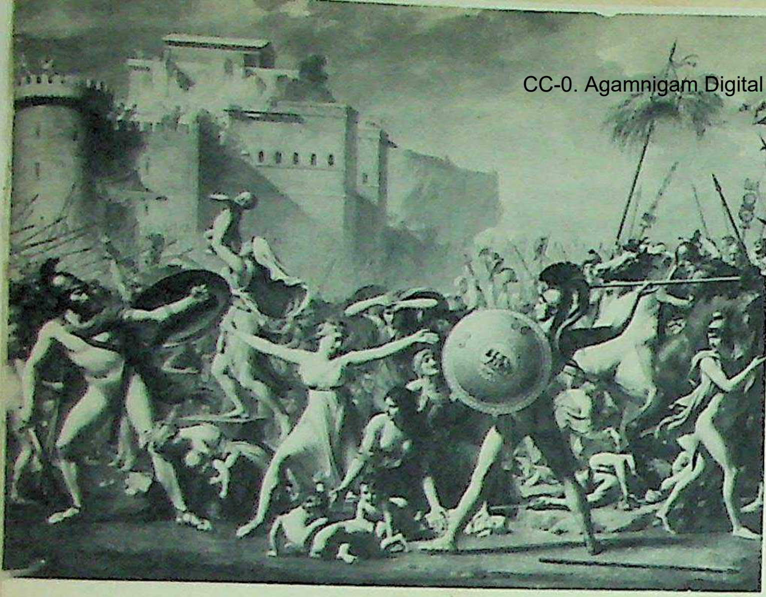
This portrait is in pastel, a medium De La Tour preferred for its swiftness and pliability. Thanks to it he was able to capture not only the likeness but also the most fleeting expressions of his fashionable sitters.

PERRONNEAU *French, 1715-1783*
PORTRAIT OF MADAME DE SORQUAINVILLE
Oil on canvas. 39⅜ x 33½"

Like De La Tour, who overshadowed him in his own time, Perronneau was primarily a portraitist. The smile he has rendered here is an ambiguous one; it is friendly, yet it plays only on the lips. The eyes are serious, with a discreet touch of melancholy and tenderness.







DAVID *French, 1748-1825*
THE BATTLE OF THE ROMANS AND SABINES
Oil on canvas. 152 x 204¾"

This large canvas was painted in 1794 when the painter, an intimate of Robespierre who had been guillotined, was still held in prison. Woman plays the role of the conciliator in this painting which is meant as an exhortation to pardon and peace between warring brothers.

INGRES *French, 1780-1867*
ODALISQUE
Oil on canvas. 36 x 63¾"

The immaculately painted oriental accessories only furnish an excuse for the title; actually the theme is the ever-recurrent one of Venus or the female nude. Concerned with line and purity of arabesque, he has changed the shape of the female body, softened and distilled it, re-creating it in an idealized form.

colorplate 20 ⟶

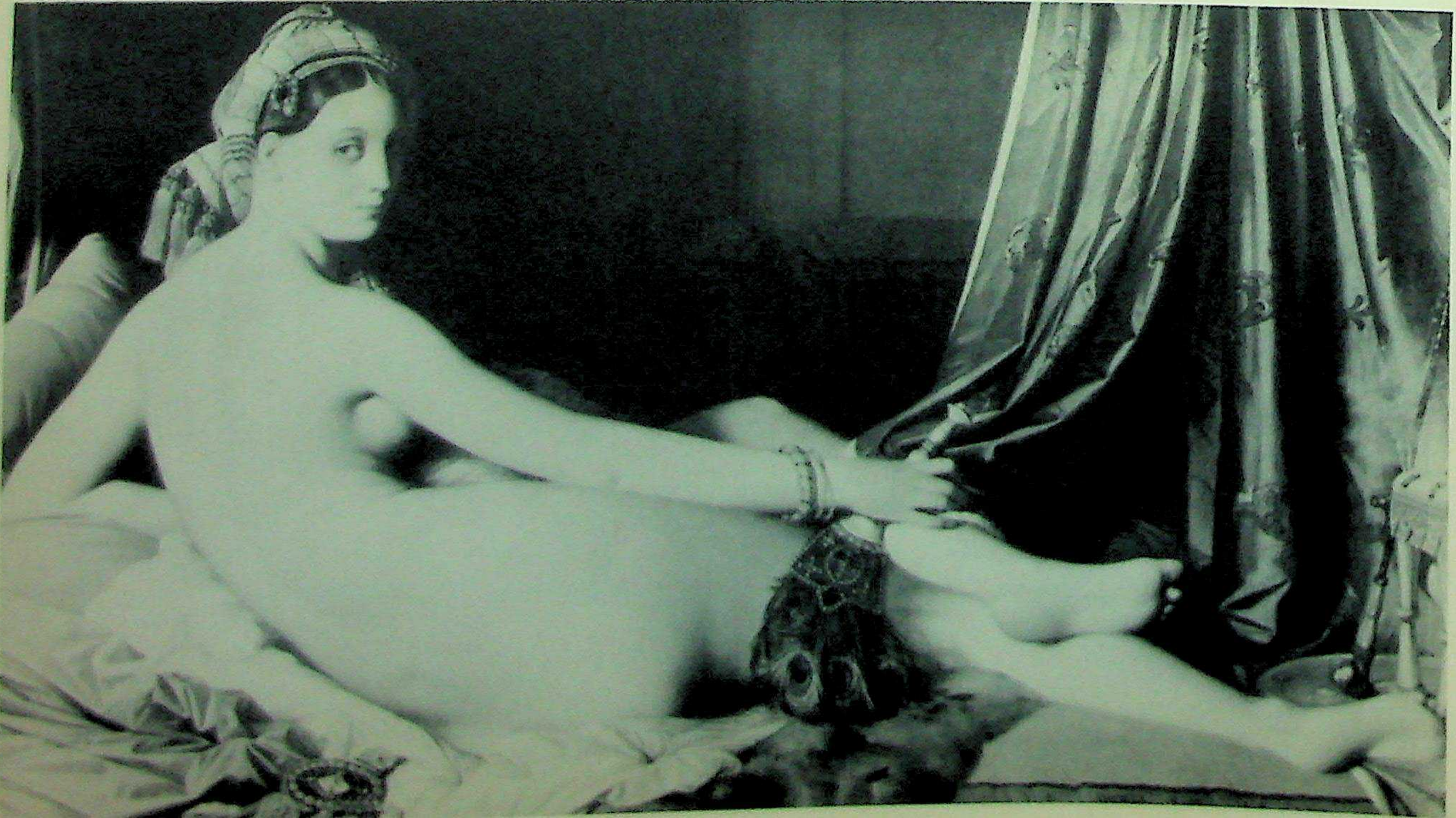
INGRES

French, 1780-1867

PORTRAIT OF MADAME RIVIERE
Oil on canvas, 45⅝ x 35⅜"

David's greatest pupil, Ingres lived in Rome for many years, ultimately becoming director of the French Academy there. His classic style was mainly inspired by Raphael, although for his subject matter he often strayed into the medieval or exotic pastures of the Romantics. He was a flawless draftsman, and indeed drawing was the foundation of his painting; color was only an addition. It was this which made him the irreconcilable enemy of Delacroix for whom color was a primary expression and the emotional basis of his art.

Ingres painted the present portrait when he was barely twenty-five years old, yet in its linear rhythm and perfection of pattern it sums up all that is best in his art. It won the admiration even of Delacroix, and in our own day painters such as Picasso have turned to it. This is one of a group of three portraits of members of the politically prominent Rivière family, all of which Ingres painted in 1805.



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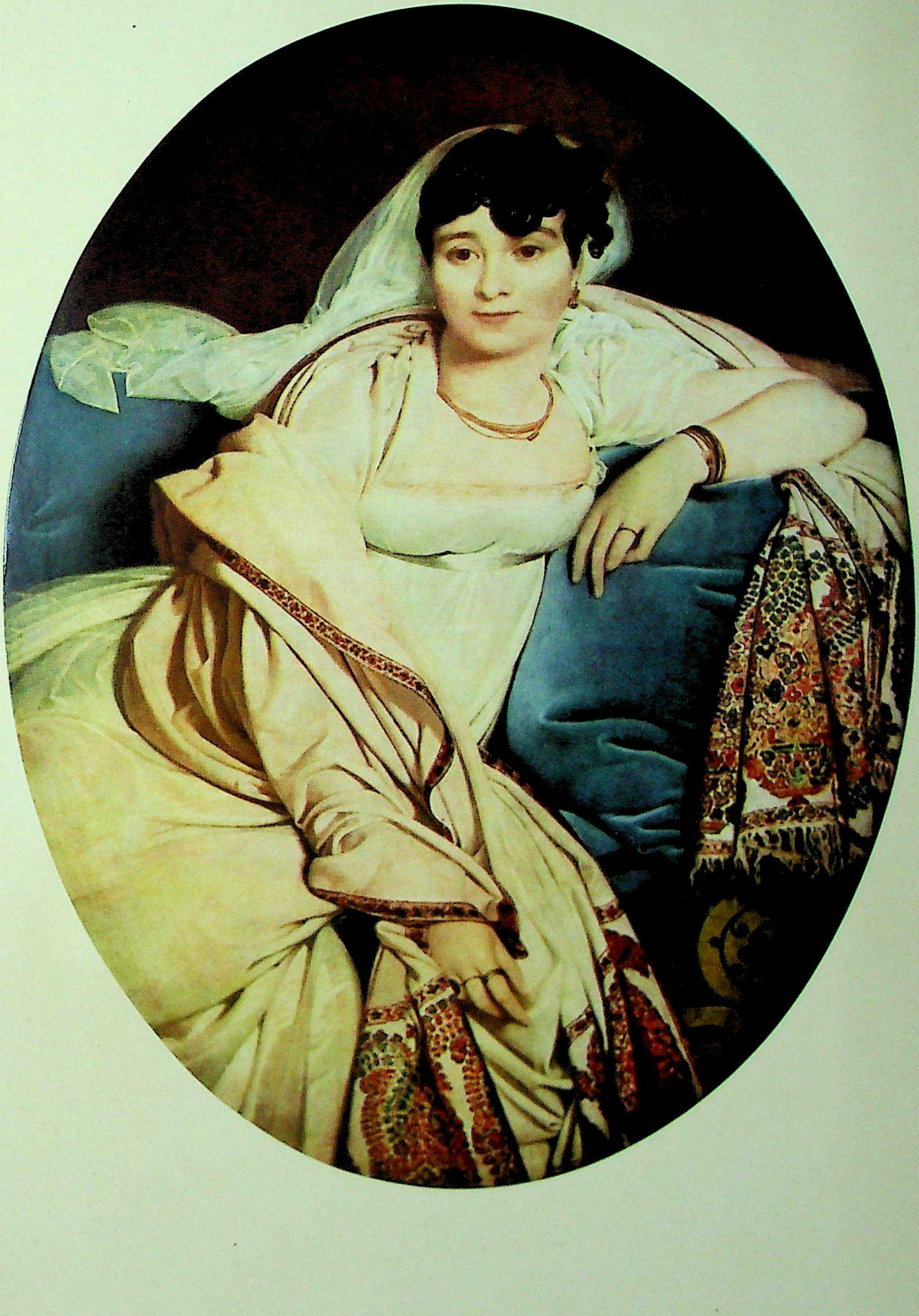
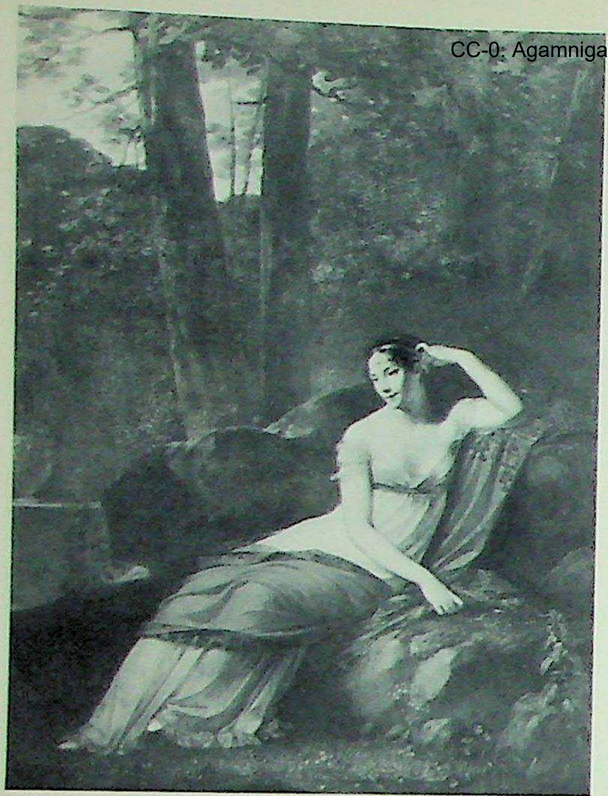




PRUD'HON *French, 1758-1823*
PORTRAIT OF THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE
Oil on canvas. 96⅛ x 70½"

Prud'hon was held in high esteem in Napoleon's court. He made numerous studies of Josephine, and here he paints her not as an Empress, but as an attractive woman—one who knew how to make herself loved. A meditative sadness heightens her graceful charm.

GERICAULT *French, 1791-1824*
THE RAFT OF THE MEDUSA
Oil on canvas. 193 x 282"

Delacroix's master and one of the main figures in the French romantic movement, Géricault poured into this immense canvas all that he had learned from his study of Michelangelo and Rubens. The French frigate Medusa *had foundered on a reef off Senegal in 1816, and after twelve days on a hastily constructed raft fifteen survivors reached safety. The painting communicates a peculiarly romantic passion for life and violence exalted by the threat of death.*

colorplate 21 ⟶

DELACROIX

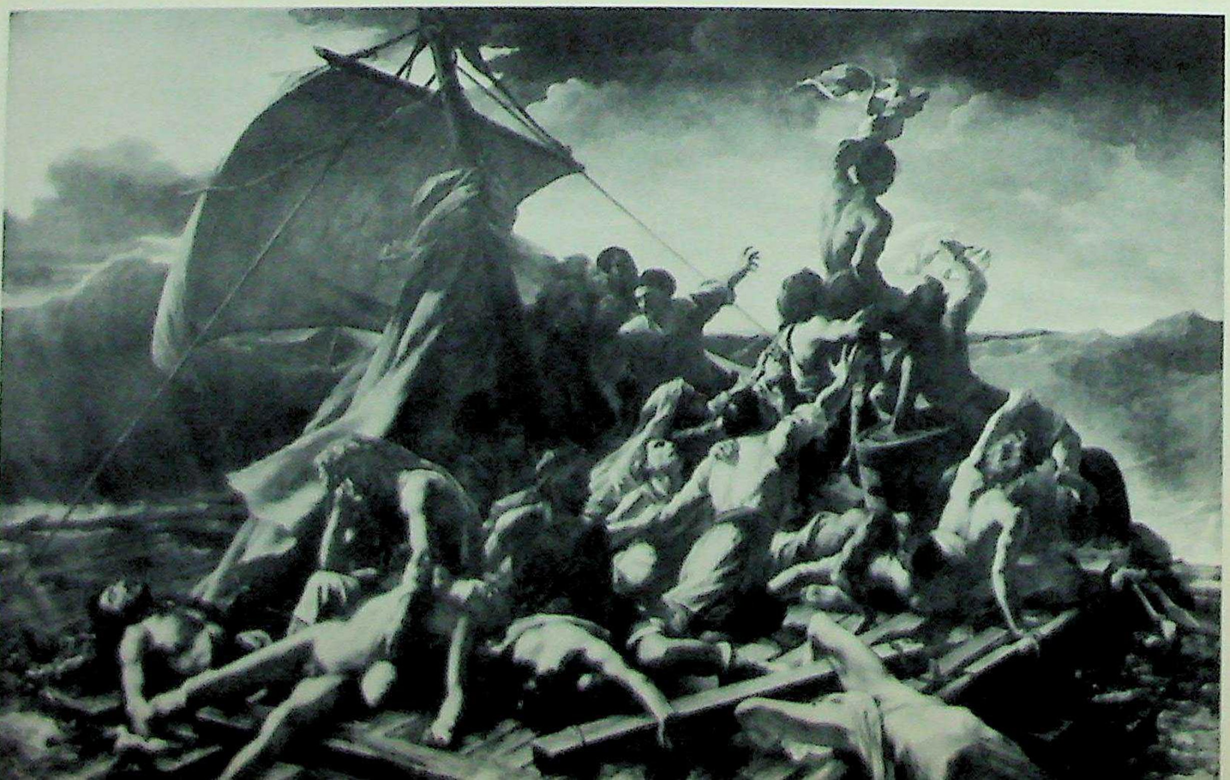
French, 1798-1863

LIBERTY LEADING THE PEOPLE

Oil on canvas, 102⅜ x 128"

A disciple of Géricault, Delacroix was a man of many talents and interests, a passionate intellectual. He was quickly adopted as leader by the young painters who were banding together in opposition to the pupils of David. A fierce enmity developed between Ingres, who became the standard-bearer of classicism in painting, and Delacroix, who, strangely enough, also thought of himself as a "pure classicist."

Delacroix was not actively interested in politics, but, like Byron, he was stirred by the ideal of freedom. The heroic figure of Liberty, brandishing the flag of the Revolution, leads the people of Paris, the bourgeois as well as the street urchin, over the barricades. The real and the allegorical are daringly combined; by depicting the stiff and livid corpses under the flamelike figure of Liberty, the artist creates an impassioned vision of men willing to die for her sake. The contrast between contemporary dress and classical nudes, between familiar scene and epic grandeur, creates the shock of "modernity" which Delacroix intended.



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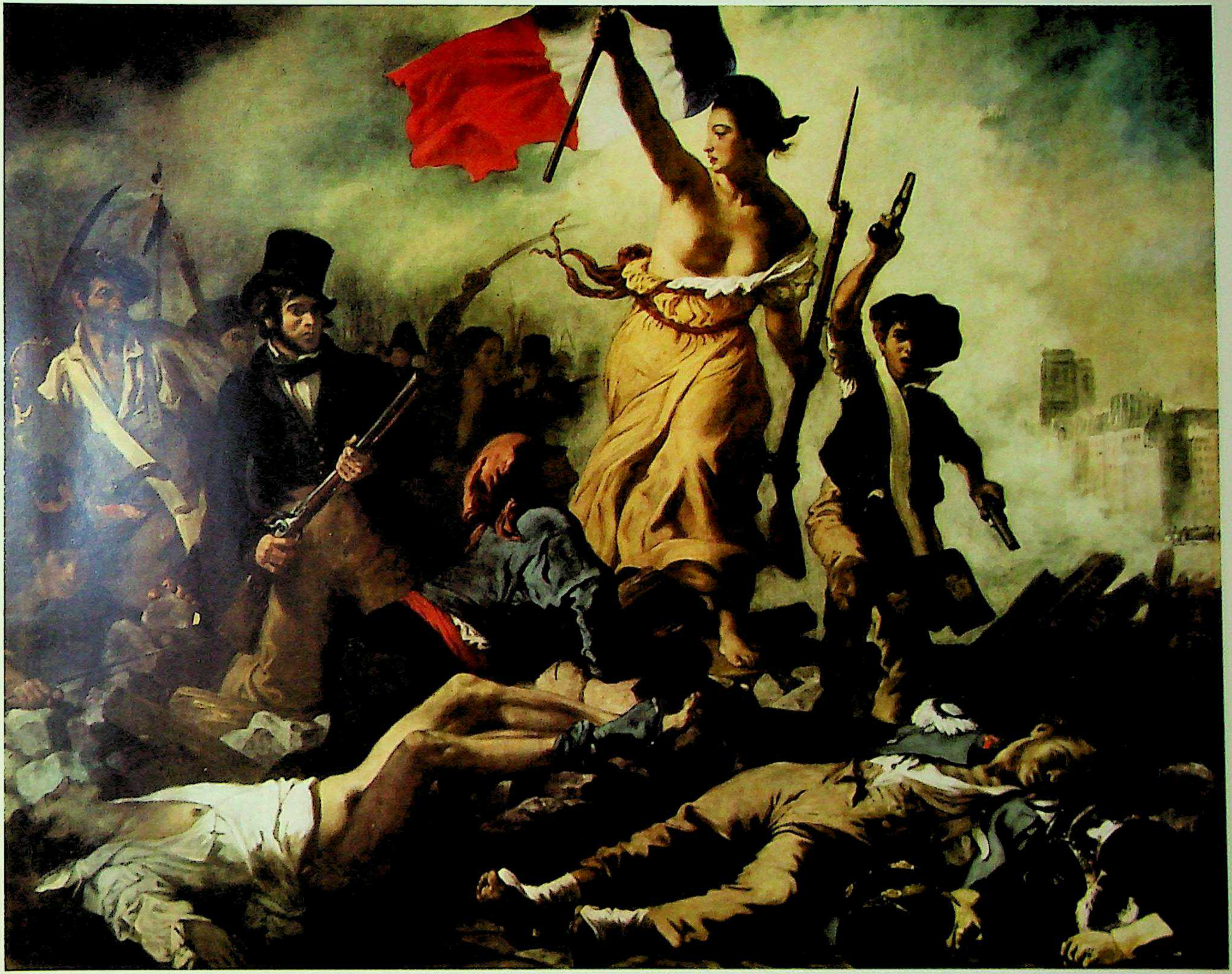
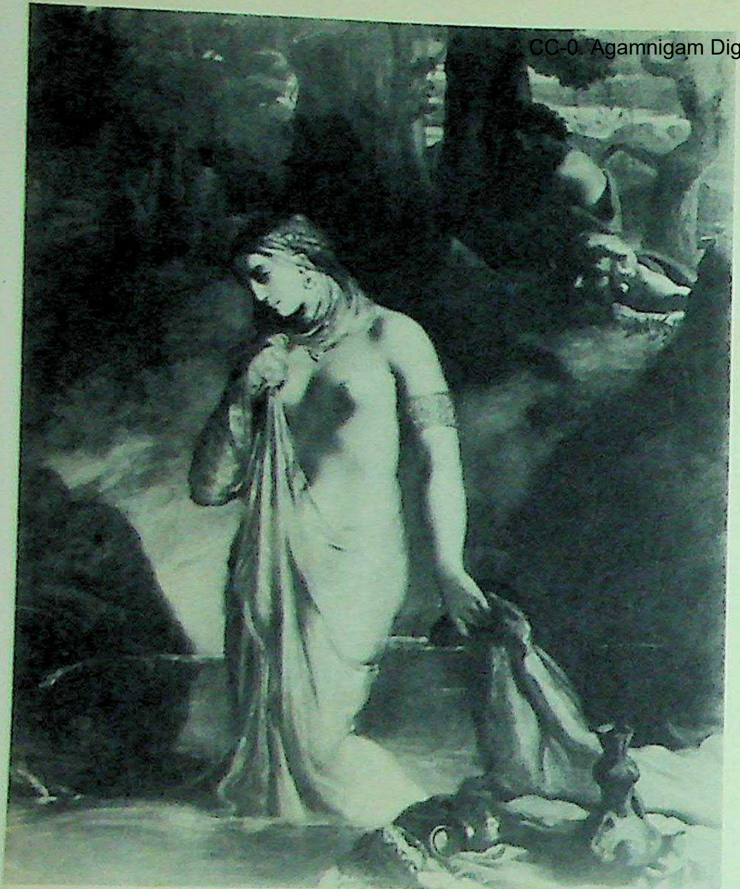




CHASSERIAU *French, 1819-1856*
SUSANNA AT THE BATH
Oil on canvas. 100⅜ x 77⅛"

Chassériau's career was as brilliant as it was brief. By the age of fifteen, when many painters have barely chosen their vocation, he had already been Ingres' pupil for five years. This Susanna, with its combination of quite personal feeling and the amplitude of a monumental style, foreshadows his enormous success as a muralist.

colorplate 22 ⟶

COROT

French, 1796-1875

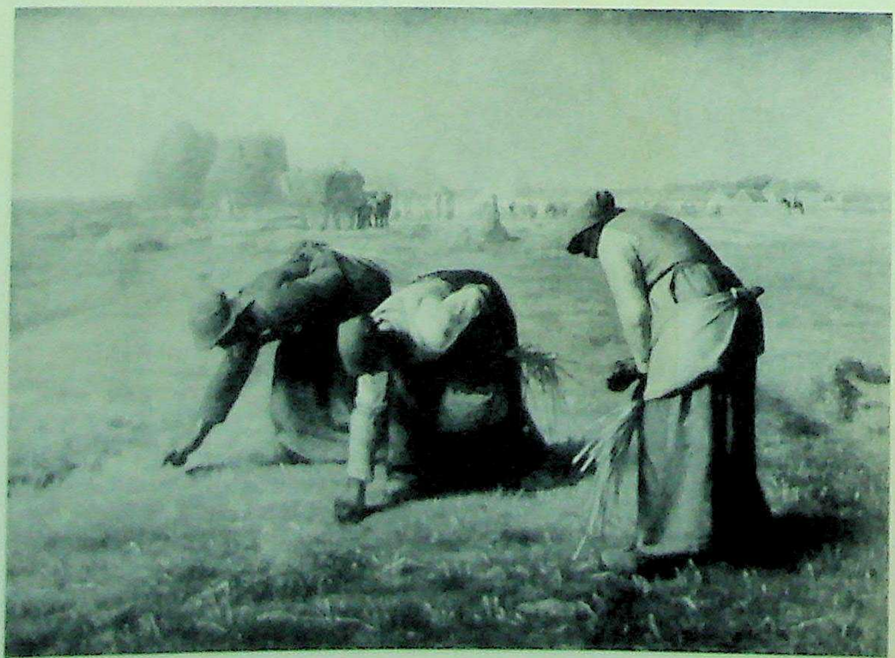
THE BELFRY AT DOUAI
Oil on canvas, 18½ x 15⅜"

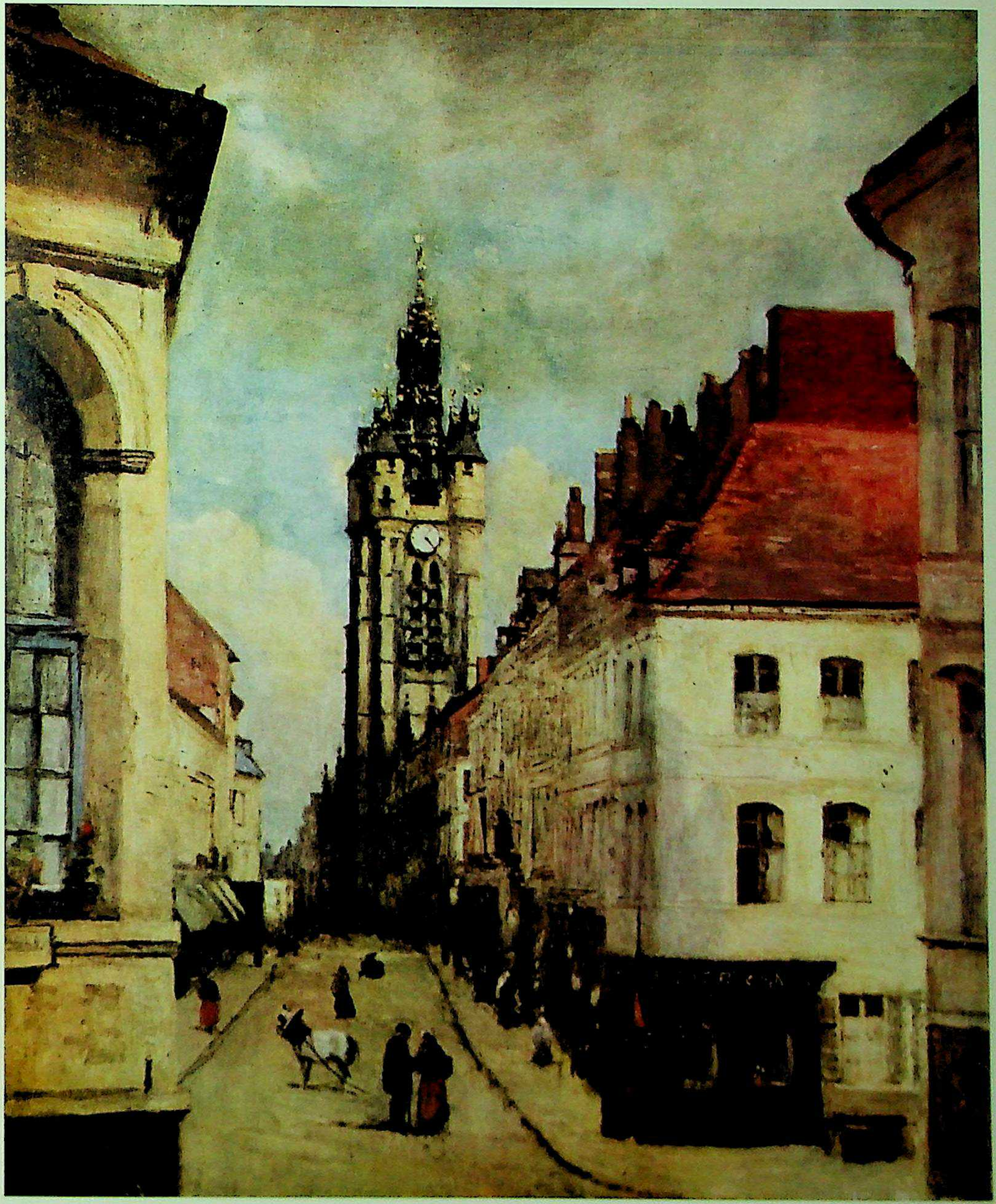
"Be guided by feeling alone," Corot wrote in his notebook. "If you have really been touched you will convey to others the sincerity of your emotions." He followed this precept in all his work, from his early portraits and nature studies to the misty woodland scenes he began to paint in the last third of his life under the spell of Virgil's poetry. Although his previous painting had been almost ignored, the silvery landscapes he produced with such tenderness and delicate skill from about the middle of the century on caught the public's fancy and won him wide popularity.

He painted the *Belfry of Douai* in May, 1871, from the window of a house where he was staying; some old friends, fearful of his safety in Paris under the Commune, had taken him away from the capital. Though the artist was then seventy-five, he devoted some twenty sessions to this work which, in its mastery of light and bright color, tells us that Impressionism was on its way.

MILLET *French, 1814-1875*
THE GLEANERS
Oil on canvas. 33⅛ x 44⅛"

Eighteen fifty-seven, the year of the Gleaners, marked Millet's coming to maturity; he had gained confidence in his genius and he was beginning to be recognized. In this painting, as in his other mature work, he succeeded, through carefully calculated simplification and the constant study of gesture, in giving an epic and moving proportion to figures and actions which had previously been treated in art as subjects of anecdote or satire.





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colorplate 23 ⟶

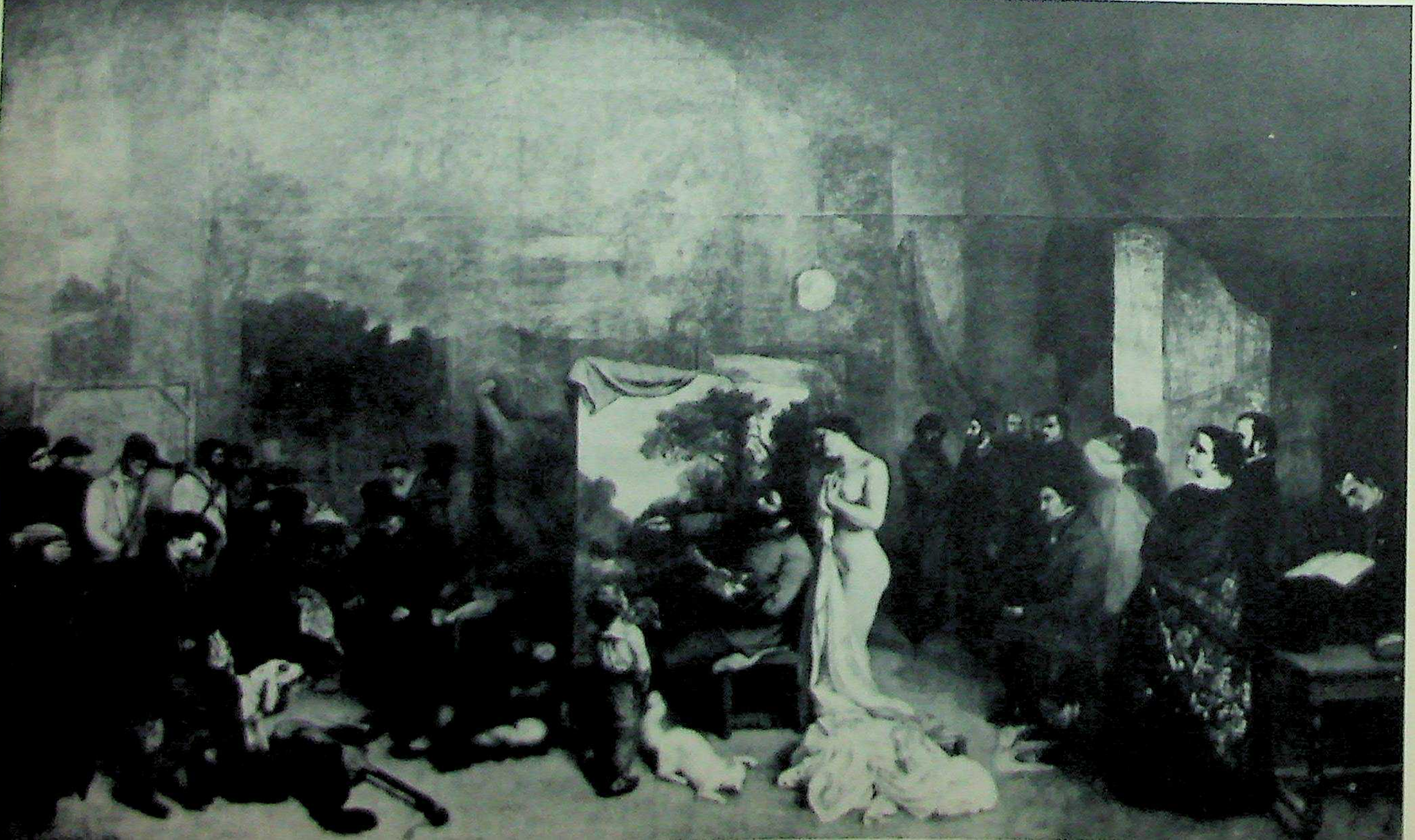
DAUMIER

French, 1808-1879

CRISPIN AND SCAPIN

Oil on canvas, 25⅝ x 32½"

Daumier took up painting comparatively late in his career. At first he used a few dark colors and modeled his figures through effects of light and shadow in a powerful and sculptural way. Toward his fortieth year his color range began to broaden, and in *Crispin and Scapin* the active blue, red, and white seem to quiver in the brightness of the footlights. Gas illumination was still a novelty, and like Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, Daumier was fascinated by the new light effects it produced on the stage. His gift for characterization brings to life the dialogue between the two valets in Molière's play, *Les Fourberies de Scapin.* No written page could ever convey so pointedly the expression of those raised eyebrows, the crooked look, and the smile of a cheat who folds his arms in triumph, satisfied with his low cunning. Daumier's art, like that of the theater itself, is both realistic and expressive to the point of symbolism.



COURBET *French, 1819-1877*
THE STUDIO
Oil on canvas. 141¾ x 234¾"

Courbet's own subtitle for this immense painting is: "A real allegory, defining a seven-year phase of my artistic life." He intended to recapitulate not only his interests and ideas but also to represent personalities; the poet Baudelaire, for example, is portrayed at the extreme right of the painting. Strangely enough, while a woman poses in the nude the painter has represented himself at work on a landscape. This was one of the forty canvases Courbet exhibited at his own "Pavilion of Realism" at the Paris Exposition of 1855.

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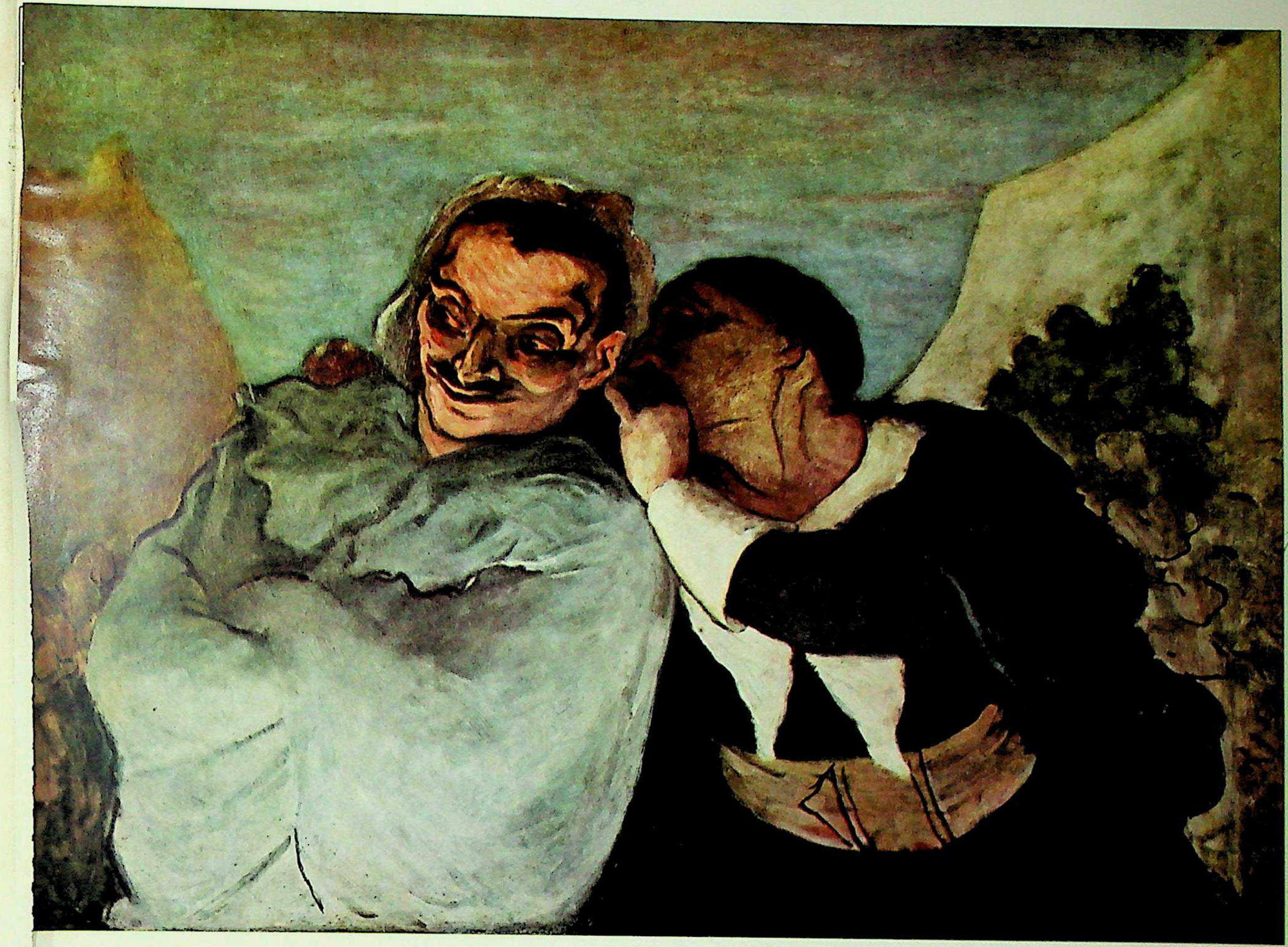
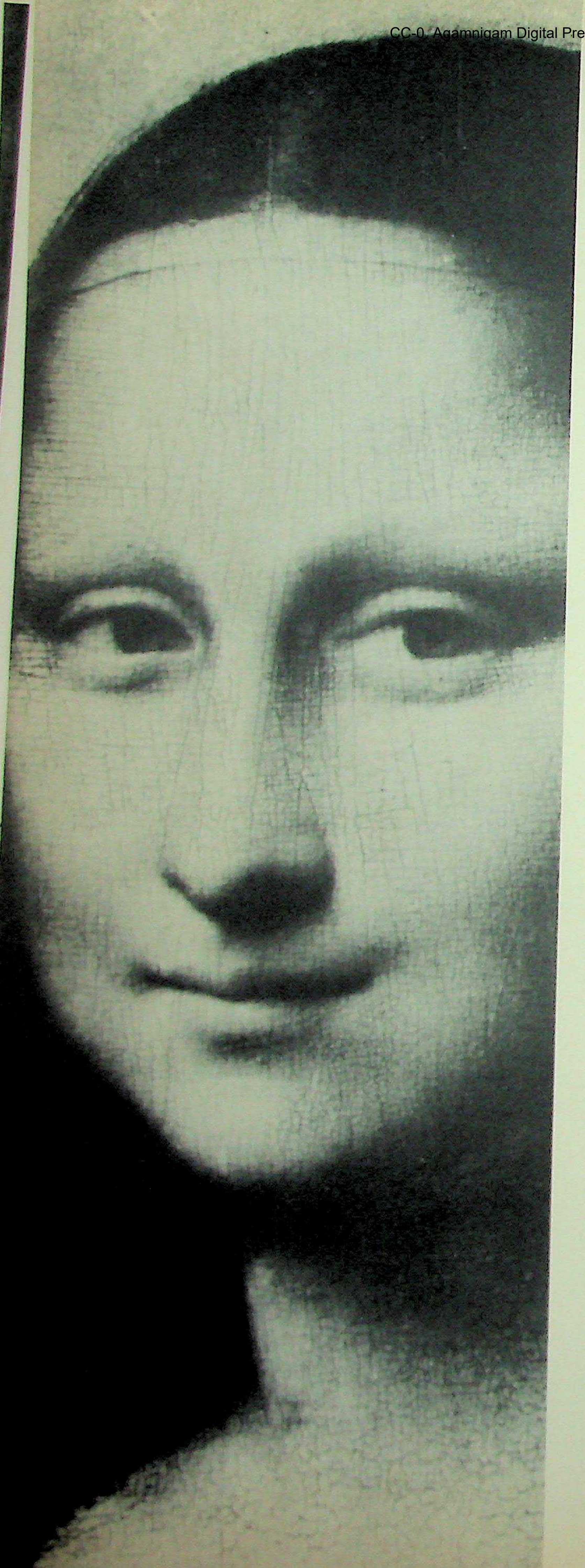
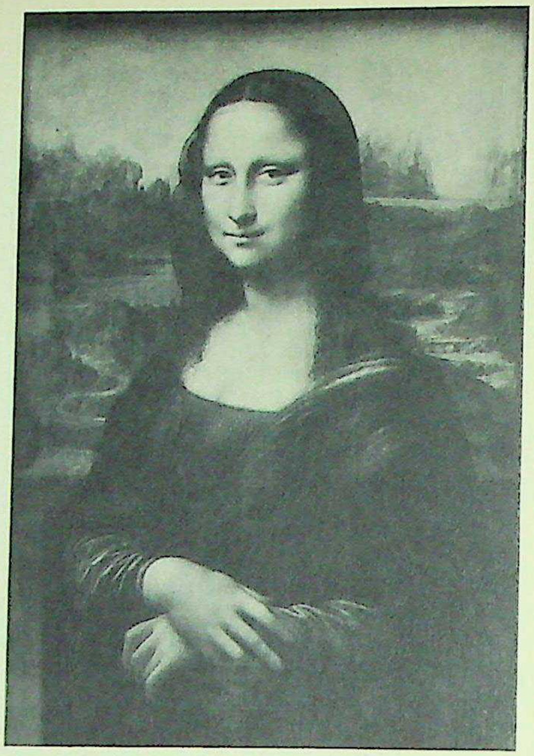






on the cover, colorplate 24

LEONARDO DA VINCI

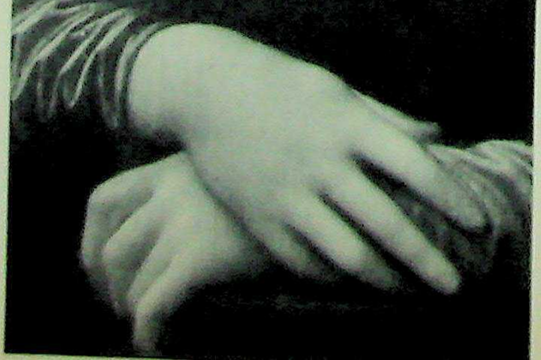
Florentine, 1452-1519

MONA LISA

Oil on wood, 30¼ x 20⅞″

Leonardo's dazzling creative intellect made him not only an outstanding artist and aesthetician, but also a philosopher, physicist, astronomer, geologist, inventor in dynamics and ballistics, engineer, and architect. His notebooks and manuscripts are among the most important sources we have for the study of sixteenth-century learning and philosophy.

There is perhaps no painting in the world more celebrated than Leonardo's *Mona Lisa,* his most perfect and characteristic work. The picture must have meant something very special to the great humanist; he worked long on it and took it with him to France when he was summoned by Francis I. The subject, by tradition the wife of the Florentine Francesco di Zanobi del Giocondo (hence the popular alternate title for the painting, *La Gioconda),* never got her portrait, which was bought by Francis I after Leonardo's death and hung at Fontainebleau and later at Versailles. Ironically, this masterpiece did return to Florence for a brief period, from 1911 to 1913, when a patriotic Italian stole it from the Louvre with the intention of restoring it to its creator's native country.



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